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ABSTRACT

Guidelines for assessing the current language skills of a language-delayed child and increasing the child's level of communicative competence are provided, based on experience at the Environmental Language Intervention Project at Macquarie University's Special Education Centre in Australia. The program is organized around five sequentially ordered levels from looking, with an adult, at an interesting event to the more complex skill of asking and answering questions. Chapter 1 defines language and its stages of acquisition, and chapter 2 outlines the steps in organizing and setting up a language program. The kind of adult language facilitating children's language acquisition is outlined in chapter 3. The following five chapters describe procedures for assessing a child's current level of communication skill and for teaching new skills. The levels include: (1) prerequisites for talking; (2) performatives and protowords; (3) single words; (4) early sentences; and (5) ways of extending the meaning expressed by the child. Chapter 9 suggests ideas for implementing language training activities with groups, and chapter 10 explores some issues in the use of signs as a supplement to speech. The program is reviewed in chapter 11. Assessment and record forms are appended. (MSE)

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LEARNING TO TALK

A program for helping language - delayed children acquire early communication skills

Sandra Bochner • Penny Price • Linda Salamon

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Special Education Centre
Macquarie University

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A Video Program

As a supplement to **Learning to Talk**, a series of video programs has been prepared to provide a visual demonstration of the procedures described in this book. Copies of these videos may be obtained from the Special Education Centre.
For further information please contact:

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Sandra Bochner
Penny Price
Linda Salamon

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INTRODUCTION

Since the advent of Headstart programs in the U.S.A. in the 1960's, there has been a dramatic increase in the provision of early educational services for children who are at risk for problems in learning. Before that time early school experience had been provided for a small minority of children—mainly the rich and the very poor. Today, in countries where access to education is universal, the value of early education for all children is acknowledged. It is further acknowledged that, while good progress in the child's early years does not guarantee optimal development, initial poor development is often difficult to overcome; so help should be given early to ensure that children who are at risk develop to their full potential.

In the 1960's in the U.S.A., Headstart programs were developed to give extra help in learning to culturally disadvantaged preschool children. In fact, the groups who were enrolled in these programs were mainly poor and deprived though they often also included children who would normally have been classified as slow or mildly mentally retarded. The Headstart projects demonstrated that, with early intervention, poor or slow children could acquire skills comparable with those of their peers who were not so handicaped. As a result of the positive effects demonstrated by Headstart programs, there was an increase in provision of early education services for all children, including those who had problems in learning.

The early education programs that were subsequently developed for handicapped children usually included activities designed to improve skills in a number of areas—gross and fine motor, self-help, social-emotional, cognitive and language. However, of all these areas, language, particularly expressive language, proved to be the most difficult to establish. Indeed it is now generally accepted that learning to talk is one of the most difficult skills that children have to acquire. Many of the early programs developed for helping handicapped children begin to talk were based on a behavioural view of learning. According to this view, language is learned through selective reinforcement of random vocalizations of the infant, with successive shaping and modelling of the sounds required from the child. In language intervention programs developed according to the behavioural model (e.g. Gray & Ryan, 1973; Kent, 1974) the child learns, in a highly structured setting, a prescribed series of tasks. Teaching involves careful reinforcement of appropriate responses to selected stimuli. Such programs were in general successful, in that children learned the behaviours that had been targeted for training. However, it was found that these newly acquired skills did not always generalize to behaviour outside the formal teaching situation. This problem was particularly acute for the development of expressive language. Children taught to speak in highly structured behavioural programs could produce trained utterances outside the teaching situation but were unable to express themselves spontaneously in social conversation.

During recent years knowledge about language development in normal children has increased dramatically, particularly with the contribution of psycholinguists, including Bowerman (1973), Brown (1973), Bruner (1975), Halliday (1975), Nelson (1973) and

Schlesinger (1974). These theorists emphasized the semantic and pragmatic aspects of language development, as well as the more traditional syntactic aspects that had been of central importance in behavioural theories of language. This change in emphasis is evident in current explanations of how children learn to talk; these suggest that language is acquired during the child's actions and interactions with adults, objects and events in his environment. This view of the process of language acquisition has been called a **transactional** model. It takes account of all three aspects of the child's experiences that are involved in learning to talk: cognitive, social and linguistic. According to this explanation of learning acquisition, first words emerge out of the child's participation in 'word games'. Here adult and child take part in a recurring sequence of actions that may involve objects and include opportunities for turn-taking and the production of consistent sounds (e.g. 'boo' games or a Jack-in-the-Box, with adult and child alternating in the surprised and surprisor roles). Out of such activities the child begins to use specific vocal patterns, first as part of the activity and gradually to signify some aspect of the game that is important to him. Subsequently he will use the 'word' to refer to or request something in relation to the game. Early words emerge out of such action routines and are essential parts of action in the first instance. Much later, words are used to represent objects or events and, even later, to make requests.

Intervention programs based on a transactional view of early language begin by setting up opportunities for children to take part in word games, ensuring that they hear consistent and appropriate adult speech and are encouraged to produce the vocal as well as action components of the games. The teacher should be an adult who has frequent contact with the child and teaching should take place within the child's natural setting, with plenty of opportunities provided throughout the day for the child to practise his emerging skills. Program objectives should be selected after careful observation of the child and his current interests. As a result of such language teaching experiences, the child should first begin to incorporate consistent vocal elements into specific action sequences and in time will begin to use these vocal patterns to refer to and later represent particular aspects of his environment.

Whom is the Language Program Designed to Help?

The procedures described here are suitable for use with any child who appears to understand speech but is not yet talking at a level appropriate for his age. The program may be used with children who are having problems because of mild learning difficulties, possible mental retardation, developmental delay, physical handicaps or language delay associated with a bilingual background. The program is designed to facilitate the acquisition of early speech in children who have little or no expressive language or who are just beginning to put two words together. It is not designed to help children who have adequate language skills but are experiencing marked problems in the production of speech sounds. We believe it is appropriate for children with visual or hearing handicaps, though they will probably need supplementary training to compensate for their specific handicaps. Current evidence suggests that the processes that underlie early language acquisition are common across all children, regardless of the effect of any specific handicapping condition.

This book is the product of experiences gained during the development of programs intended to establish early language skills in developmentally-delayed or mentally retarded children within the Environmental Language Intervention Project at the Special Education Centre, Macquarie University. The language project was based on the transactional approach to language acquisition and was strongly influenced by both practical experiences with language-delayed children and current theory and knowledge on language acquisition in both normal and handicapped children. The procedures described in the book are therefore derived from current theory but also from real experiences with children who were having problems in learning to talk.

The research projects from which the procedures were derived were supported by a number of sources, including:

- Macquarie University Research Grant
- Apex Foundation for Research into The Study of Mental Retardation
- Department of Youth and Community Services
- Laurel House Diagnostic and Resource Centre, Parramatta
- Marsden Hospital and Marsden Special School, Westmead
- Chatswood Assessment Centre, Chatswood

This book is designed to be used by parents, teachers or anyone working with language-delayed children. It provides guidelines for assessing a child's current language skills and increasing that child's level of communicative competence through provision of appropriate learning experiences.

The language program is organized around five sequentially ordered levels that move from the prerequisite skills of looking with an adult at an interesting event to the more complex verbal skill of asking and answering questions. The book comprises eleven chapters. In Chapter 1 language is defined and the stages of language acquisition are described, while in Chapter 2 the steps involved in organizing and setting up a language program are outlined. The type of adult language that appears to facilitate language acquisition in children is delineated in Chapter 3. In the following five chapters procedures are described for assessing a child's current level of communication skill and for teaching new skills. The preliminary skills that are prerequisites for talking are examined in Chapter 4 (Program Level 1). Chapter 5 is concerned with performatives and protowords, the first consistent sounds that are produced by children (Program Level 2). The single word stage (Program Level 3) is considered in Chapter 6, while Chapter 7 looks at early sentences (Program Level 4) and Chapter 8 at ways of extending the meaning expressed by the child (Program Level 5). In Chapter 9 ideas are suggested for implementing language training activities within group situations, while Chapter 10 explores some issues associated with the use of signs as a supplement to speech, for children who have extreme problems in producing recognizable words. The program is reviewed in Chapter 11. Relevant additional materials are appended.

In preparing this book, the authors have chosen, when referring to children, to use the masculine form for the sake of simplicity and economy of expression. In this there was no intention to be discriminatory or preferential towards either sex.

The language program was derived from experiences gained during implementation of the Environmental Language Intervention Program developed by MacDonald and his associates at the Nisonger Centre, Ohio State University. We wish to acknowledge our debt to this program, particularly to the program guide **Ready, Set, Go: Talk to Me,** D.S. Horstmeier and J.D. MacDonald, Charles E. Merrill, Columbus, Ohio, 1978.

CHAPTER 1

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Before outlining the steps involved in setting up a language program, the stages that children pass through in learning to talk are described, since the language program is based upon these stages. A definition of the term language is proposed.

What is Language?

Language may be defined as an organized set of symbols or signs that are used by individuals within a social group as a means of sharing meaning. They can take the form of gestures or words (spoken and written). Language can be seen to comprise three parts

(1) *symbols*, signs or words that represent meaning, e.g. dog =

(2) *rules* for combining symbols, signs or words to convey meaning, e.g.
boy throw ball.
(agent action object).

(3) *uses* of language or what we do with words, e.g.
- to get information: 'how far?'
- to attract attention: 'look'
- to reject: 'go away'
- to denote ownership: 'my ball'.

When planning a language program for a child, we need to take account of these three aspects of language. Initially the child must learn that he can make things happen by using gestures, sounds or words. Later he needs to begin to use consistent words that are also used by his social group, e.g. parents, teachers and peers. Once he has begun to use consistent words, he will need to learn to combine his words according to the rules that are used by his language group. When he reaches this stage and can produce short sentences of 2 or 3 words, then it can be claimed that the child has acquired the beginnings of the language system of his community.

How does Language Develop?

It is generally agreed that the stages children pass through in learning to talk are relatively consistent, though there may be some variation in terms of factors both internal and external to each child, such as an overall delay in development or a profoundly impoverished social environment. However these influences usually serve to delay some aspects of the process of speech acquisition, rather than to distort it.

Current knowledge suggests that the stages children pass through in learning to talk can be summarized in terms of the following sequence: (See Figure 1).

Preverbal Stage

The production of relatively uncontrolled sounds (Pre-program level)

Initially an infant's vocalizing is largely triggered by physical events; he cries because he is hungry or in pain. Soon he learns to vocalize for his own entertainment, with squeals and shouts when alone in the cot. The sounds produced at such times are often interpreted as meaningful by a caregiver, but there is no evidence that the baby produced the sounds consciously, to cause an effect on a listener.

FIGURE 1

STAGES IN LEARNING TO TALK

Preverbal Stage	Uncontrolled Vocalizing
STAGE 1	Meaningful interaction with people and objects.
	Looking together Turn-taking and imitation Appropriate play
STAGE 2	Preverbal Skills (1) performatives (2) protowords
STAGE 3	First Words
STAGE 4	Combining words into sentences (1) Putting two words together (2) Early sentences
STAGE 5	Extending Meaning

1. Vocalizing during meaningful interaction with people and objects: Prerequisites for talking—Early games (Program level 1)

As the infant develops, he acquires an increasingly complex set of behaviours for exploring his environment and learning about the objects and people that he encounters. Initially he finds out about objects by putting them in his mouth, but gradually he acquires new play strategies, learning to bang, throw or wave them. These strategies become increasingly complex; he begins to put small objects inside larger ones, or to bang two objects together to create an interesting effect. Some of these actions he learns by accident while others are learned during play sessions with a familiar adult, in games that involve looking together, turn-taking and imitation. Vocalizing frequently accompanies these activities.

2. **Preverbal Skills** (Program Level 2)

(1) **Performatives**

Early play routines often include a sound element within the set of actions (e.g. a squeal to accompany the pop-up toy or 'er-er-er' with a banging game). These consistent sounds associated with actions are called **performatives**. Their production is a sign that the child is gaining some control over the sounds that he makes.

Many early sounds appear to be imitations of interesting noises heard by the child, e.g. 'tick tock' (clock), 'toot toot' and 'brm brm' (bus or car), tongue click (horse). Others reflect familiar speech patterns, e.g. lip smacking (preferred food), humming (going to sleep).

(2) **Protowords**

A protoword is a word-like sound used in a consistent way and directed intentionally at a listener to cause an effect. Such sounds are likely to appear when the infant begins to combine his contact with objects and his interactions with adults in one event. For example, an infant may have watched entranced as a wind-up car turned circles and will have also watched his father wind up the toy to activate it. The signs of emerging language skills appear when the child attempts to attract his father's attention to activate the toy by using a consistent sound or pattern of sounds. Similarly a child who has frequently played a 'boo' game with his grandmother may begin to hide his face and say 'boo' to grandmother to remind her of the game and request that they play it again. Some children create their own 'words' to represent their experience. Such protowords are used with familiar adults, who understand the meaning of the sounds. Normally protowords are abandoned as the child learns to use more conventional word forms.

3. **First Words** (Program Level 3)

After a period during which performatives and proto-words are used to convey their meaning, most children move on to the stage where real words are substituted: e.g. 'car' replaces 'brm brm' or 'bottle' is used instead of sucking noise. Both the performatives and more conventional words are learned during experiences that include the provision of clear models of appropriate sounds or words by adults.

The first words produced by children are usually associated with experiences that have a high level of interest for them. For example, children often first label things that move or change ('gone'), make a noise ('car') and are colourful ('balloon'). Words are used first to draw the attention of an adult to an event of high interest ('plane', 'bird'). Later they use words in other ways; for example, to reject an invitation ('no' to avoid a bath) or to obtain objects or services ('ball' to get a ball or to join in a game). Most first words are labels for objects and people, though a range of other words is also acquired to represent actions ('ride'), states ('wet'), attributes ('big') and other meanings ('bye'). These words are produced in a variety of situations, as the child learns that he can use language as a tool to influence his environment.

4. Combining words into sentences: (Program Level 4)

1. Putting Two Words Together

Current evidence suggests that once children have 30-50 words of various types, they begin to combine words into simple sentences in a sequence that directly reflects their experiences or perception of the world. Initially they use single words to represent a variety of different meanings: for example, 'drink' can mean a glass of milk or the act of drinking. Subsequently more explicit action words are acquired ('want', 'go') and these are eventually paired with labels to make simple sentences ('want drink', 'go car') and phrases ('want up', 'go home'). Children follow consistent rules in putting their words together to form 2-word sentences and phrases. (These rules are described in Chapter 7).

2. Early Sentences

After children learn to use 2-word sentences to express a variety of meanings, they begin to combine these to produce sentences of 3-words or more, e.g.

'me want' + 'want drink' = 'me want drink'
'go car' + 'Mummy car' = 'go Mummy Car'

By this stage children can express more detailed information with the use of modifying words for colour, size, possession, e.g.

'me go big red car'
'want my blue ball'

When the child has mastered these skills, it may be claimed that he has acquired the rudiments of his language system.

5. Extending Meaning (Program Level 5)

Once the child produces 2- and 3-word sentences, he soon begins to use some of the patterns of an adult system of grammar to indicate more complex meanings such as plurality, (e.g. car**s**) or present and past tense, (e.g. runn**ing**, 'go**ed**' (went), **fell**).

Once the child has reached this stage, he has acquired the three elements that were earlier identified as comprising the basis of a language system:

Pragmatics	he has learned how to **use** words to arouse in a listener a recognition of his intention
Semantics	he has learned to produce the sound patterns that are used in his language group to **represent** objects and events, and
Syntax	he has learned how to **combine** words in a sequence that conveys his intended meaning to a listener.

An understanding of the stages through which normally developing children pass provides a framework for planning intervention procedures to help those children who are experiencing difficulty at any of the early stages of language acquisition. For example, when playing with children who have not yet begun to talk, you will need to:

(a) provide many opportunities for the child to take part in activities with a familiar adult who will model clear, simple and appropriate words for the child to learn to produce.

(b) encourage the child to take turns in the activity so that he can have an opportunity to produce the sounds or words that you have been modelling.

Such opportunities occur often in the lives of most children. However, if the child does not attend to the relevant aspects of such activities or if he is passive and does not take a turn in producing the sounds with his partner, then he will not begin to talk at an age when his peers are beginning to use words. The aim of this program is to ensure that the language-delayed child takes part in situations that have the potential for developing language.

Conclusion

This chapter was concerned with providing the reader with some understanding of the particular theoretical model and related research evidence upon which the language program is based, and with an outline of the normal stages of language development. All the procedures to be described in the following chapters were developed in terms of this particular view of the processes that underlie language acquisition. The program is therefore based firmly on knowledge derived from theory and research and so demonstrates the value of identifying solutions to problems encountered in everyday experiences from theories that have been fully explored and validated.

CHAPTER 2

ORGANIZING A LANGUAGE PROGRAM

A number of general principles may be identified that underlie the language program to be outlined in this book. In this chapter these principles are described and their implications for teaching early language skills are discussed. Initially the assumptions that underlie the program are identified. The steps involved in setting up a language program are then outlined. These include:

assessing the child
selecting objectives
implementing intervention procedures
checking progress

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

In setting up a language program a number of assumptions are made about various aspects of the program that is to be implemented. These assumptions are usually derived from previous experience or knowledge of recent research in the field. The assumptions underlying the program described in this book were derived largely from the transactional model of language acquisition outlined by McLean and Snyder-McLean (1978) but were also strongly influenced by a number of recent reports of research in this field, particularly by such writers as Bates (1976), Bruner (1974), Dore (1978), Greenfield and Smith (1976), and Halliday (1975). The theoretical accounts of early symbolic development by Piaget (1971) and Werner and Kaplan (1963), and the Speech Act theory outlined by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), were also influential in the development of the program. These emphasized the significance of cognitive development and the child's communicative behaviour in the acquisition of early language skills.

It is not always possible to recognize and formulate all of the assumptions that underlie a program such as that outlined here. Some can be stated readily but others may not be obvious to those who are closely involved in the program. In considering the procedures that comprise the program, six major assumptions were pinpointed. These may be stated thus:

1. First words emerge as a result of the child's daily experiences involving both people and objects.
2. The child acquires language through interaction with consistent caregivers—at first parents and later teachers.
3. When a child has difficulty in learning to talk, experiences can be provided that may facilitate his language development.

4. Language training is best carried out in the child's natural setting by an adult with whom he has frequent contact. Teaching sessions should be carried out as often as possible, preferably daily, in a brief, relatively structured play session (5-10 minutes), with opportunities to practise new skills beings provided throughout the day.
5. Necessary prerequisite skills should be developed, including attending turn-taking and imitation. First words should emerge out of the child's play, so appropriate play skills need to be developed, with provision of clear speech models in association with these activities. This will ensure that the child learns to associate specific speech sounds with the games he is playing.
6. The child has to learn how to produce the sounds that he wants to say. His first attempts may bear little resemblance to the adult form. Early attempts to say words should be accepted and a clear model provided of the word the child is trying to say.
   e.g. child — 'ba'
   adult — 'yes, it's a ball'

It is evident that the program described in this book is derived from a strong belief that language emerges out of the child's daily experiences with his social and non-social world. While the importance of interaction with others as a primary means of learning language is recognized, emphasis is also placed on the central role of the child himself in this process. The child's role here is **active**; he must learn to initiate, not just respond. The content of any language program must be derived from the child's own interests. Cognitive processes are involved here, since learning to talk involves learning about the environment. The linguistic system is also involved in that the child must learn the language system of his community. Thus the program is firmly based on three components:

- the child's active participation in social exchanges;
- the child's knowledge of his physical world; and
- the child's gradual acquisition of a shared system of signs that can be used to communicate his meaning to others.

So, having decided that a child needs assistance in the area of language, and having recognized the theoretical bases that underlie the program to be outlined here, what procedures are involved in setting up a language intervention program for a child? The following sections of this chapter provide an outline of the general procedures to be followed in establishing a language program. Specific details of intervention strategies at each level in the language program are described in detail in the succeeding chapters.

HOW TO SET UP A LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Having decided that a child is delayed or is at risk of delay in learning to talk, and that you want to help him acquire appropriate early language skills, you may use the procedures outlined in this book to organize a language program for him. This will involve the following four steps:

1. Assessing the Child

Before beginning a language program you will need to assess the child to identify exactly what communication skills he is using at the present time. You can find this information in two ways: by observing the child in his natural setting or by giving him a series of tasks that provide an opportunity for him to demonstrate his current skills. Ideas for the initial assessment of children's current communication skills are included in each of the chapters that describe a particular program level and some useful summary and cumulative assessment record sheets are included in Appendix C. For example, if the child is not using words or consistent sounds to communicate his needs you should read the relevant section in Chapter 4 (Program Level 1) on assessment of the prerequisite skills of Looking Together, Taking Turns, Imitation and Appropriate Play. If he has these early skills but lacks speech, you should follow the assessment guidelines outlined in Chapter 5 (Program Level 2) for early performative sounds. If he is using a few words, you should read Chapter 6 (Program Level 3) and if he is putting words together, read Chapter 7, and perhaps Chapter 8 (Program Levels 4 and 5). Once you have assessed the child you will know at what level to begin teaching.

2. Selecting Language Objectives

On the basis of the information that you have gained from assessment of the child's current level of language functioning, you can choose objectives for teaching that will help the child move to the next level of language functioning. A number of factors are important in choosing objectives. If the child is just beginning a language program, it is important that the first set of items chosen for training contains a number of items which are familiar to the child. These are called 'success' items and they help him develop positive feelings about the language 'games' that you are just starting to play. This helps to ensure that the child will look forward to the next training session. At any language level there is an unlimited variety of possible items to choose from and it is important that the items you select are ones that are appropriate to your particular child—closely related to his needs and interests.

3. Implementing Intervention Procedures

Having selected your language objectives you must choose activities and materials that will provide the child with opportunities to learn and then practise the skill that you have chosen to teach him.

Language teaching is best carried out in three types of situations:

1. as part of a planned activity that has a high level of interest for the child;
2. during appropriate events that occur spontaneously during the day, and
3. within daily routines.

1. **Planned games** that are highly interesting to the child can be used to provide opportunities to practise current skills. For example, at Level 1 in the language program, games involving blocks, pop-up-toys, puppets and finger rhymes are a good way to teach the prerequisite skills of attending, turn-taking, imitation and appropriate play. At Level 2, activities with dolls, cars, model animals and musical instruments provide situations that can be used for the production of performative sounds. A surprise bag full of objects is a good way to encourage a child at Level 3 to label objects, while games such as Lotto or Snap are useful for teaching the Level 4 and 5 skills of early sentences and asking questions.

For successful teaching, the same games are usually repeated over a number of days, to give the child time to learn the skills that have been selected for teaching. Often three or four different games are included in each teaching session, with new games introduced and old ones dropped according to the interest and progress of the child. See Chapters 4-8 for details.

2. Many opportunities for teaching language occur **spontaneously** during the day. For example, the child at Level 1 can be encouraged to imitate Mummy stroking a cat, or to join in a game of throwing a ball back and forth. Skills such as waving goodbye can be learned at appropriate times. Similarly the performative sounds of Level 2 can be practised when planning a ride in a car (brm brm) or when the child sees a cat or dog. There are many occasions when single words and simple sentences (Level 3, 4 and 5) can be practised, such as during shopping excursions, while unpacking a shopping bag or going for a walk. Once the idea of providing opportunities for practising words has been understood, then advantage can be taken of the many situations that occur naturally during daily activities. This type of teaching situation is particularly appropriate if language teaching experiences can only be provided within normal daily activities in a group setting.

3. Much of children's early language learning occurs during participation in **routine** events that occur often and have a known or largely predictable format, such as
    - eating lunch
    - playing at the park
    - visiting grandmother
    - going to bed

Within the relatively fixed routines associated with such recurring events, opportunities can be planned for children to practise appropriate language skills. For example, taking turns can be practised on a slippery slide at the park (Level 1) and performative sounds can be produced while on a swing (Level 2). There are many opportunities for using single words and sentences during meal time or on visits, e.g. 'want egg' in answer to a question 'do you want egg or tomato', and 'my turn', 'Hello Nana', or 'one, two, three, four' (Levels 3, 4, 5), when on visits to the park, to Granma's house or going up the stairs to bed. It is important to take advantage of these recurring situations, because they provide a rich source of opportunities for children to practise simple language skills. Similarly nursery rhymes and familiar stories with repeated dialogue (e.g. The Three Bears) can allow children to practise talking.

If possible, you should try to select language objectives that can be taught in all three types of situations—interesting games, spontaneous events and routine situations. If it is too difficult to include a special game in your daily routine, then make sure that you look for appropriate opportunities during the day and try to identify some regular event where a relevant language tasks can be provided for the child.

Finally, tell everyone involved in this event about your current language objective. This will help to ensure that the child begins to use his new skills at all appropriate times—not just when you are there to encourage him. Once the child begins to show that he has learned the skill you have been teaching him, such as taking turns, making appropriate animal sounds, labelling objects and using simple sentences, you should tell others, such as grandparents and aunts, the regular babysitter and the Sunday school teacher, what the child has learned to do. Write it on a card and pin it on the kitchen noticeboard, or write a short note to the preschool teacher or other helpers, so that they can encourage the child to use his new skills at appropriate times. This will ensure that he has plenty of practice and will help enable him to move quickly to the next level in the language program.

If you can't provide individual sessions and must incorporate your language teaching objectives into group situations, then these routine events are particularly important as a means of teaching appropriate language skills to a child. Morever, once you know the objectives that are appropriate, you can include a specific language goal for each of the children involved in a group activity. For example, at juice and eating times or when asking for equipment or permission to go outside, children can be taught to use appropriate actions, gestures or sounds to get what they want or need. These situations have the advantage that each child can see and hear his peers model appropriate actions and speech. Routine events, whether involving children individually or in groups, can provide useful opportunities for teaching new language skills. (This issue is discussed in detail in Chapter 9).

4. Checking progress

Once you have begun to implement a teaching objective, you will need to carry out some evaluation to check if your objectives are being reached. Here you will be interested in:

1. Progress on Specific Objectives
2. Progress within Program Levels

1. Progress on Specific Objectives

Sometimes it is helpful to monitor a child's progress on a current language objective by recording each day whether a particular action or sound was produced successfully by the child. Some examples of data collection sheets are included in Appendix B. These sheets are most appropriate if you are using planned games in your language program. If you have decided to use this approach, you may use the data sheets to record whether the child was successful or not in each task that you had planned. You may be able to tick the appropriate column during the game, or you may find that you must remember what happened and record it as soon as possible after the game is finished. Such information can be useful in two ways. It can help you realize that the child is learning the skill you are teaching. This can be important if progress is very slow. It is also very useful as a means of deciding when to move on to a new activity or higher level in the language program.

A record of daily activity can also help you recognize when the child is not improving on a particular task. Such lack of progress may result from a lack of interest in the activity you have chosen or because the task is too difficult for the child. In either case you may need to abandon that activity and select a new, more appropriate task for the child.

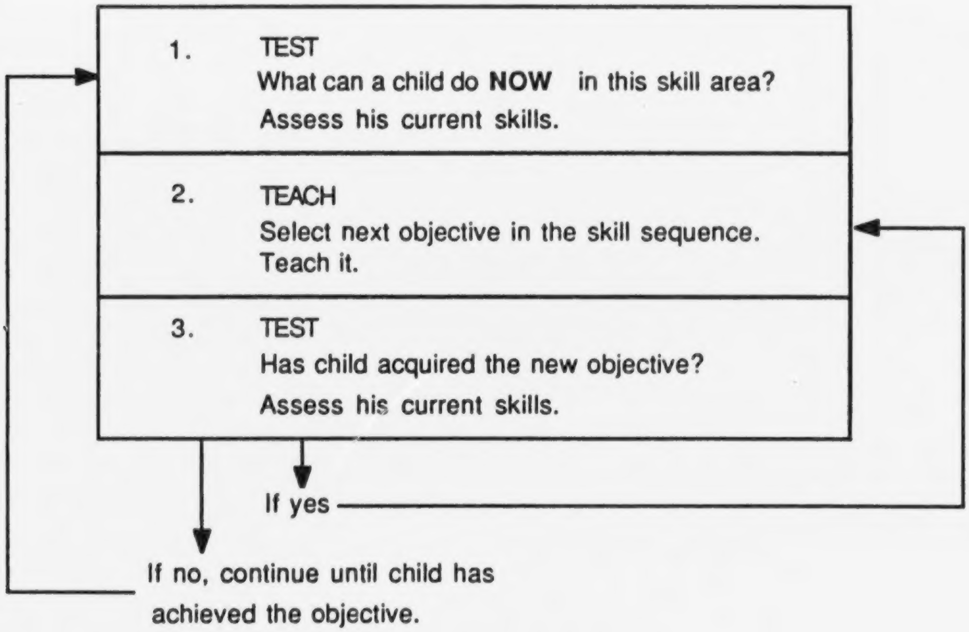
2. Progress on Program Level

When a child appears to be learning the activities you are giving him quickly without much practice, you may assess him again to find out if he is ready to move on to the next level in a language program. You will need to re-administer the assessment task that you gave initially, or give the child a similar set of activities that will test the same skills. If he is now able to do at least 3 of 4 tasks, then he is probably ready to move on to a higher level in the language program. If he can't do this number of tasks correctly, then you will need to practise these skills a little longer.

This sequence of steps is often referred to as the test-teach-test sequence (see Figure 2)

FIGURE 2

THE TEST-TEACH-TEST SEQUENCE


1. TEST
What can a child do **NOW** in this skill area?
Assess his current skills.
2. TEACH
Select next objective in the skill sequence.
Teach it.
3. TEST
Has child acquired the new objective?
Assess his current skills.
If yes
If no, continue until child has achieved the objective.

SETTING UP A DAILY LANGUAGE SESSION

Now that you have assessed the child, and know what current skills he has in terms of the Levels defined in this program, you can begin to teach him some new skills. Specific details of teaching at each language level are included in the following chapters. The main procedures involved in setting up a language training session include the following:

1. Identify the appropriate training level.
2. Identify an activity that interests the child very much.
3. Think of up to 10 specific actions or words to teach (including 2 or 3 words that the child already knows as 'success' items).
4. Decide how to set up the activity to ensure that there are opportunities for the planned words or actions to occur.
5. Collect the materials you will need.
6. Make a simple record form, to record if the child performed the action or made the sound. Some examples of appropriate forms are included in Appendix B.
7. While the major teaching is often carried out in the structured game that is specifically planned for the child, care should be taken to provide opportunities through the day for him to practise his new skill where appropriate. This can best be done by ensuring that everyone who has contact with the child knows your current objectives.
8. Once he demonstrates that he has acquired a specific skill that you have been teaching (e.g. can tap table and say 'bang bang' correctly over 3 days), then drop this item from your list and choose a new task. Criteria for moving from one training level to another are described in each chapter.

9. If a child does not appear to be learning a particular task that you have been presenting for up to two weeks, you may need to reconsider the interest or difficulty level of that task for the child. Possibly you should abandon the item and select a new one that is more appropriate.
10. Whenever possible you should avoid confronting the child with demands for him to look, do or say. He will usually attempt your tasks if they are embedded in an interesting game. If he doesn't want to join in the game with you, it may be necessary to change your plan. Perhaps the activity you selected is not interesting enough for that child, perhaps he does not enjoy sitting with you, so you may need to look for naturally occurring situations in which to embed your teaching. The task you selected may in fact be too difficult and you should move back to an earlier level in the program, to establish the new routine.

The most important points to remember when you begin to teach are the three golden rules for language training:

(a) **encourage the child to respond** and to do what you want;
(b) **ask only three times** then leave that item and try it another on another day; and
(c) **avoid confrontation** or a strong demand to respond.

Conclusion

In this chapter the basic procedures that underlie all levels of the language program were outlined in some detail. These procedures provide a basic framework for the teaching activities described in each of the following program chapters (4, 5, 6, 7 and 8). You may find it helpful to refer back to this chapter if you are uncertain about what to do at any point in later sections of the book.

Now, before you do anything else, read the next chapter (Chapter 3), which outlines some very important points on how to talk to children who are language delayed.

CHAPTER 3

TALKING WITH CHILDREN

Children learn to talk through being **involved in conversation** with an adult, so the adult's role in helping a child learn to talk is very important. Many studies have shown that the way mothers, and other adults, and even older children, talk to young children is different from the way they talk to other adults. The changes that they make to their speech are all aimed at helping the children to take part in conversations, even when they have not yet learned all the skills necessary to do so. So you will find mothers of very young babies taking **both** parts in the conversation, answering for the infants until they are able to do this for themselves, but **involving** them in the conversational process. The more opportunities children have to be **involved** in conversation, the faster they will learn the language they need to become competent conversational partners.

There are a number of things which adults do that can help make the task of learning language easier for children. Some of these are more important than others. For example, a responsive, attentive, 'tuned-in' adult is probably the most important resource young children can have in the early stages of acquiring language and communication skills. It provides them with encouragement in their early attempts at communicating and allows them to gain confidence in adults, as a source of information about how to say and do new things.

So try to:

- watch closely children's attempts to communicate, and make sure that you respond clearly and appropriately;
- follow their lead, rather than insisting that they do what you want;
- if they are not very active, encourage them to participate in the activities you begin, but follow their lead once they join in or start initiating routines and games that you have shared in the past.

In addition to being responsive and involving children in conversations as often as you can in a wide range of situations, a number of other suggestions about the way you can talk with children are listed below:

1. **Take part in shared activities and routines.**

   Children's early language learning takes place through frequent repetition of familiar routines which involve shared activity and turn-taking,
   e.g. peek-a-boo games
   saying good-night to members of the family

2. **Comment on what the child says and does.**

   Comment in simple phrases and sentences on what the child is doing as you play together. This will encourage him to talk about what he is doing, and involve him in conversation. If he does not take his turn, then you can take it for him. This provides him with the language that he will need to talk about the things that are of interest. **Follow the child's lead** and talk about what **he** is doing rather than imposing your ideas on him,

e.g. yes, wash teddy
teddy sleep
good-night, teddy

3. **Encourage the child when he talks.**

You can do this by showing the child that you are interested in what he is telling you. By responding to what he is doing and saying, you are involving him in a conversational exchange, and the more often this happens the sooner he will learn to take part in longer conversations,

e.g. (child) 'cup'.
(mother) 'yes, Jamie's cup'.

4. **Coax the child to talk more.**

Encourage the child to take turns in longer conversational exchanges with you by focusing on the topic or activity in which he is involved. Encourage him to respond to **your** response, and try and keep the conversational exchange going for several turns. This lets him practice his conversational skills in situations which are familiar and meaningful to him,

e.g. (child) toot-toot
(mother) train's going! . . . first exchange
(child) cow
(mother) is the cow going on the train? . . . second exchange
(child) cow train
(mother) off they go! . . . third exchange

By following the child's game the mother has involved the child in three exchanges relating to the topic or game that they are playing. This is how conversational skills are built up.

5. **Don't talk too much.**

Because they find it so easy, adults often tend to talk too much. The more you talk, the less opportunity your child has to take part in any exchange or conversation. Remember that the more a child talks, the more he learns about how to use his language. So don't be afraid to **wait** for him to take his turn — even if there is quite a long silence.

6. **Extend the child's language.**

When talking to the child, try and provide a model for the next step that he will be taking,

e.g. child says 'bear eat'
you say 'bear eat toast'

7. **Speak slowly and clearly.**

   If you speak too fast the child may not be able to understand what you are talking about, and a clear model lets him hear the words that he will be trying to say.

8. **Use simple words.**

   Use short, simple words to describe the objects and actions which the child is involved with in his daily experiences,

   e.g. teddy, dog, cat, cup, boy, give
   push, run, jump, pat

   It may be a good idea to leave out the little words like 'a' and 'the' in the early stages, so that the child can focus on learning the main words which give him meaning.

   e.g. 'drink milk' rather than 'you drink your milk'
   'open door' rather than 'please open the door for me'

9. **Don't use too many questions or commands.**

   If you are constantly telling the child to do things, he will be so busy trying to **do** what you want that he will not have a chance to talk about the things he is interested in, or wants to do.

Conclusion

Remember that children need plenty of opportunity to be involved in conversations and they need a responsive, interested and capable adult to help them take their part in the conversation at whatever level they are capable of participating — gesture, sounds, single words or sentences. It is through taking part in conversations that they will learn to talk. So we should create opportunities for conversation in all the child's natural settings — in the home, at play group or pre-school, and in the wider community. It is important to remember that communication involves a **conversational interaction** between the child and a key adult and that the way the adult talks can make the child's task of learning to talk very much easier.

CHAPTER 4

Level 1

Prerequisites for Talking

EARLY GAMES

While the sounds that the baby produces are important precursors of speech, babbling and lalling do not lead directly into words. First words are derived from the child's earlier experiences with objects and more particularly with people in his daily life. Thus if children are delayed in learning to talk, attention should be paid to their daily activities, and to their interaction with people and objects.

Current knowledge suggests that language development is dependent on three major types of experience at the preverbal level:

A) **joint attention or looking together** learning to look with an adult at something of interest to both;

B) **turn-taking**: learning to take turns with an adult in an activity of joint interest. This involves **imitation**, which is a powerful means of helping the child to acquire and practise the skills that he will need in social conversation;

C) **appropriate play**: the acquisition of appropriate strategies for exploring and manipulating objects and materials that are encountered in the environment.

In this chapter, suggestions are made about how to assess a child's skills at this level, and ideas are presented to stimulate the acquisition of these skills where appropriate.

Note that while the three types of activities are presented in the order—looking together, turn-taking and imitation, and appropriate play, children can acquire these skills concurrently, or in any order. Attending skills normally need to be learned first, and children often acquire functional play skills without learning to imitate or take turns. However each of these skills is important if a child is to learn to talk appropriately. So whatever the language level of your child, check each of these areas, and give him more practice if he appears to have poorly developed skills.

A. LOOKING TOGETHER

Current evidence suggests that the origins of language lie in **activities that involve the child and an adult in jointly attending to an object or event that has interest for them both**. Check if your child will follow your lead and look at things with you.

Suggested assessment activities

Your main goal here is to find out if your child can look at things with you. You may assess his skill in this area by observing him during the day or you may set up a special time and check how he responds to the activities that you introduce. Here are some ideas for this. Notice that the four activities suggested range from relatively simple tasks like looking at a moving, colourful toy operated by an adult, to the more difficult task of looking at a book with an adult. You should substitute other activities if you feel that these suggestions are not appropriate for your child. (A summary assessment form is included in Appendix C).

Looking together

a) **Will the child look at an interesting toy that is put in front of him?**
Take a toy that moves, makes a sound or is colourful (e.g. a pull-along toy with moving parts that makes a noise). Encourage the child to watch it. Does he look for at least 5 seconds? YES/NO

b) **Will the child look at a paper bag in which you have hidden a surprise**?
Hide a small toy in a paper bag. Attract the child's attention—let him know something is hidden inside. Open it slowly and let him find the toy. Does he look for at least 5 seconds while you open the bag? YES/NO

c) **Will the child look at your hands while you play a finger game**?
Play a singing game that has hand movements (e.g. 'twinkle, twinkle, little star', or 'open, shut them'). Does the child watch your hands while you sing for at least 5 seconds?

OR

Play with a glove puppet. Does your child watch the puppet for at least 5 seconds?
YES/NO

d) **Will the child look at pictures or a book with you**?
Take a book with clear simple pictures that will interest the child
e.g.
- PM Readers—Baby
- Look and See Books—Mealtimes
- LDA Photo Action Cards
- Simple pictures cut out of magazines and pasted into a scrapbook.

Sit beside the child and look at the pictures/book, talking about them and pointing to features that may interest him. Does the child attend to a picture for at least 5 seconds? YES/NO

If the child can attend to most of the activities that you introduced to him (i.e. 3 out of 4), then you can move onto the next section. If he was not able to look at interesting things with you (i.e. only 1 out of 4), then he probably needs training in very simple looking together activities, such as following a colourful and noisy toy that moves into his line of vision. If the child passed a few items (2 or 3), then he probably needs more practice in this skill.

Here are some ideas for teaching 'Looking Together' skills.

Suggestions for training

You need to think of a number of activities that have high interest for your child and are a means of developing looking-together skills. This may include colourful, noisy, moving toys, finger rhymes, puppets or colourful, simple picture books. Remember that you can repeat a game that interests the child several times during one teaching session, and over several days. Try to continue to repeat a game until you think he is beginning to lose interest. Stop well before he is bored.

Play these games with the child sitting close to you—on your lap or close beside you. If appropriate try to keep the activity close to your face and exaggerate facial gestures so that the child learns to look at your face as well as the toy. Puppets are very good for teaching the child to look at you, as well as the object.

Interesting Toys: Most children attend to toys that move, make a sound and are colourful. Here are some suggestions for such toys. You will find other ideas for suitable toys in the Playways catalogue, particularly in the sections for children 0-3 months and 1-2 years.

- Jack-in-a-box or pop-up toy
- spinning top
- puppets
- wind-up toys
- pull-along toys
- noisy cars and models that move
- toys with moveable parts—e.g. bus with model people inside, or fire engine with moveable crane.
- blocks: knock tower over, build tunnel

The following may also be used to encourage joint activity and attention

- water and sand play—pouring, splashing, patting
- play dough—rolling, patting, cutting
- musical instruments—banging, shaking.

When playing with a toy together with a child, try to keep it within your control and close to you. Look at him and talk about the toy's movement and sound. Respond positively if he looks at your face. Your aim is to teach him to attend to you and what you are doing.

Finger games, nursery rhymes and puppets: These are useful for teaching a child to attend to an adult. Try to choose songs and rhymes that are brief and interesting for a child who cannot yet attend for long. Make the actions near your face to encourage the child to look at your lips and eyes as well as at your hands. Or play a finger game that involves touching some part of the child's body. Here are some ideas for suitable simple finger games. (See page 162 for a list of sources for finger games and nursery rhymes).

Finger Games and Nursery Rhymes

Rock-a-bye-baby
Twinkle, twinkle
This is the way a lady rides
Incy wincy spider
This little piggie
Round and round the garden
Two little eyes
Here's a ball for baby
A little ball, a bigger ball
See my fingers dance and play
Open, shut them
Om-pah-pah
Johnny works with one hammer
Other family songs and nursery rhymes

Simple but attractive puppets can be made out of an old sock. A face can be drawn on your fingers. Most children are fascinated by the movements and sounds of a puppet, so it can be a powerful means of drawing their attention to you.

Pictures and Books: Looking together at pictures and books is a very effective means of teaching a child to attend closely to an activity with an adult. This is also a time when the language that the adult uses with the child is very important. Remember that Chapter 3 sets very clear guidelines about how to talk to children so that they hear good models of appropriate language.

When selecting books for language development experiences it is probably best to begin with very simple picture books that clearly represent objects that the child knows, such as baby books that have simple photographic pictures of familiar objects like apple, cup, chair, plate, spoon. Some appropriate books are listed in the References. Books can be prepared to suit children's particular interests by cutting out pictures from magazines and pasting them into a scrap book or mounting them in picture albums. Family photos can also be used here. Albums have the advantage that the pictures can be changed as a child's interests change. The pages are usually strong enough to withstand handling by the child. Clear plastic page covers can also be clipped together and used to mount pictures that are to be used for daily language sessions.

When looking at a book together, point to items that are likely to interest the child, commenting with clear simple words. Allow time for him to look, and respond to any initiative that he takes in looking at the pictures. Follow his lead. Remember that children with poor skills need more opportunities than other children to practise a new task, so look at the same book or set of pictures for at least three or four consecutive sessions. Children acquiring early skills need many opportunities to practise and learn.

Taking the next step

When should you decide to move on to the next skill? You need to assess him and see if he can now do the tasks that you have been teaching. Select at least two toys and two finger plays that you have not already introduced to the child. See if he can attend to them for at least five seconds. If he watches three of the items, he is probably ready to move onto the next stage in the program.

B. TAKING TURNS AND IMITATION

Two important skills that underlie learning to talk are taking turns and imitation. Both these skills reflect the social basis of language. Learning to speak involves not only understanding the meaning of words and how to produce them, but also when to talk and how to take turns in a social conversation. Imitation is important because it is a means for the child to learn to produce words. So if a child is to acquire effective language skills, he will need to learn how to take turns with a partner and how to imitate what his partner is doing and saying. Some children who can talk still need practice in turn-taking skills so that they can begin to use the words they know for effective social communication.

Initially, turn-taking and imitation skills are taught through games that involve the child in co-operative activity with an adult. Often a sound is included in the game, so that he begins to imitate both the actions and the sounds modelled by the adult. Subsequently, the sound rather than the action part of the activity will become significant. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Does your child know how to take turns and to imitate what to do? Here are some suggestions for ways to test these skills. Note that if the child is unable to do an item in these tasks, it is suggested that you give him some practice and then re-administer that item. This strategy (test-teach-test) is followed because it is important to know if the child is, at this stage, able to learn from even a brief training experience. If he is ready to acquire these skills, he will probably respond to training. If he does not appear to be able to do a task after a brief training session, then it is likely that he is not yet ready for these experiences and should continue with looking skills and appropriate play for a further period.

Suggested assessment activities

You can assess the child's skills in turn-taking and imitation by observing him carefully during appropriate daily activities, or by setting up a series of tasks. Here are some ideas for assessing these skills. Substitute alternative activities if you feel these suggestions are not appropriate for your child. (A summary assessment form is included in Appendix C).

Imitation

(a) **Will the child join in a game with you and imitate what you do?**

Hide your face with a scarf and, as you pull it off, say 'boo'. Will he hide his face with the scarf and pull it off, or will he allow you to hide his face, but pull off the scarf himself? YES/NO

If you answered **NO**, train the child to imitate this action. Model the task again and encourage him to imitate you. Shape his hands to do the actions. Now re-administer the task.

Does he do the action after training? YES/NO

(b) **Will the child imitate simple actions that you model?**

Sit opposite the child. Select four simple actions, e.g.

- clap hands
- hit table
- rub tummy
- drop a toy

Model the action and encourage the child to do it. Does he imitate the action? YES/NO

If you answered **NO**, give some training. Model each task again and encourage him to imitate the action. Shape his hands. Now re-administer the task.

Does he imitate the action after training? YES/NO

Turn-taking

(c) **Will the child join in a game with you that involves taking turns with a toy**

Sit opposite the child on the floor or at a table. Push a toy car to him, roll a ball or throw a small bean bag. Encourage him to return the object to you.

Does he return the object? YES/NO

If you answered **NO**, give some training. Model the task again and encourage him to take his turn in the game. Now re-administer the task.

Does he take his turn after training? YES/NO

(d) **Will the child take turns with you in an activity using objects**?

Sit opposite the child with an activity that includes small parts that can be easily put in/on or taken out/off (e.g. a peg board, small blocks, a ring game).

Demonstrate an action, e.g. take a peg off the board and put it in a container or take a block and begin to build a block tower. Say 'look, my turn'. Model the action. Encourage the child to take his turn in the activity.

Does he take his turn in the game? YES/NO

If you answered **NO**, give some training in the task. Now re-administer it.

Does he take his turn after training? YES/NO

If the child was able to pass 3-4 items on the first trial, then you can move on to the next section. If he was not able to pass at least 2 actions after training, then he's probably not yet ready for these activities. If he passed two or more items after training, then he is ready for more practice in these skills. Here are some ideas for teaching turn-taking and imitation.

Suggestions for training

Think of a number of activities that involve you and the child in taking turns and imitation. It is very important to select activities that interest the child and that he will enjoy repeating over several days. Remember that you have two goals:

1. to teach the child to take turns, and
2. to teach him to imitate your actions.

Both these skills are very useful for helping the child to acquire good play skills, as well as for learning to talk. Remember to say 'my turn' and '__________'s (child's name) turn', so that he learns the rules of the game. When you are teaching a new activity always demonstrate it first, before you ask him to imitate you. For example, if you want the child to build a 3 block tower, say 'watch me' or 'look'. Then you build the tower. Give him the blocks and say 'Now you build'. If necessary, help him to grasp a block and put it on top of another. When he can do the activity with a model, then just ask 'you build' or '__________'s (child's name) build'. Say 'my turn', 'your turn', if you want the game to include turn-taking. When selecting activities or actions for the child to learn to imitate, select a sound or word that you can pair with each action. For example, you could label each action or make an appropriate sound during doll play (smack lips, 'yum yum', 'eat, drink, wash, brush') or accompany an action such as **rolling a ball** or **pushing a car** with a sound like 'whee' or 'br'm'. This will allow the child to begin to associate a particular sound pattern with specific actions or games, and will provide a basis for you to begin to teach early sounds and words (see Chapter 5).

When beginning to teach, you will need first to model appropriate actions and encourage imitation and turn-taking. This can take place in situations that allow for relatively unstructured play—for example with dolls, water or in the sand pit. Play these games with the child close to you so he can watch you easily. Model appropriate actions. Show him what you are doing and encourage him to imitate you. Say 'look, you do this', or

'John's turn'. Some appropriate actions to learn to imitate and 'do' in a turntaking game could include:

1. **Unstructured play**

Game	Action
doll play:	● wash face, brush hair, set table, eat bickie
kitchen corner:	● cook dinner, pour tea, drink tea, wash up
water play:	● pour, empty, splash, fill,
sand play:	● dig, fill bucket, pat, build castle, make cakes
dough	● roll, pat, cut
block play	● build block tower and push over
cars, trains etc.	● push cars down ramp, under bridge
bean bags	● take turns putting bean bags in a bucket and emptying them out
outside equipment	● take turns with another child on slippery dip, climb through a tunnel
mechanical toys	● take turns to operate an action toy
commercial games	● take turns with a picture lotto

2. **Actions to imitate** (sit opposite child or in front of a mirror)
   - Roly poly with hands
   - Touch parts of the body—head, nose, lips, knees, toes
   - shake hands/clap hands
   - hammer fists together
   - stamp feet
   - finger to mouth
   - kissing noise
   - bang 2 blocks together
   - bang drum or other instrument

3. **Action songs and games**

Children usually enjoy action songs and will often produce appropriate sounds in an action song. Here are some songs that are particularly appropriate for turn-taking and imitation and can be used if you are working with the child in a group.

Action Songs
Ring-a-ring-a-rosie
Row, row, row your boat (for children in pairs)
Here we go round the mulberry bush
Everybody do this
Johnny works with one hammer
The wheels of the bus
Simon says

Where the song can include a variety of actions, let each child suggest what to do. This is a good way to help the language delayed child learn to initiate.

Taking the next step

If you think the child has learned these skills, reassess him by introducing four new activities that you have not already given him. See if he can take turns with you and imitate your actions. If he is able to do three correctly, then you can stop planning these games, though you should remember to provide plenty of opportunities to take turns during each day. You will base your teaching of first words on the skills the child acquires during turn-taking and imitation games so it is important to continue these activities until the child is able to take turns with you and follow your lead.

C. APPROPRIATE PLAY

Language emerges out of a child's experiences, particularly from his own actions with toys, objects and people. For example, before he uses a word to represent an object, he acquires strategies for exploring it (e.g. putting it in his mouth, dropping it, rolling it). Over time he will develop more complicated ways of using the object by combining early strategies (e.g. grasping, then dropping or putting it into a container) and finding new ones (squeezing, pushing, hiding, tossing). Sometimes a sound is added to an action sequence (hiding it under a cushion and saying 'ah' or pushing it and saying 'br'm'). Often these sounds have been heard already by the child while playing the game (e.g. 'br'm' from an older sibling while playing with cars, or 'ah' from his mother during a hiding game). Over time the child will begin to use part of a game to indicate that he remembers it or that he wants to play it. That part could be a gesture (hand movements to represent pushing the car) or sound (br'm). Such gestures and sounds may be used to represent other daily routines in the child's life (e.g. grasping action or pointing to indicate that he wants a toy that is out of reach, or smacking the lips to indicate that he wants a drink). The significant point is that the child develops a repertoire for using and playing with objects that he encounters often each day. These experiences are the substance out of which words emerge. So it is important that the child develops a variety of strategies to use in exploring and using the wide variety of objects and materials that he encounters each day. Does your child know how to play with a variety of toys and objects?

Suggested assessment activities

Here are some ideas that you can use to assess play skills. You should substitute other activities if you feel these suggestions are not appropriate for your child. (A summary assessment form is included in Appendix C).

(a) **Can the child play appropriately with familiar toys?**

Place a toy car, doll or stuffed animal in front of the child and encourage him to play with it. Does he play appropriately (e.g. push the car, cuddle, stroke or walk the doll or animal? YES/NO

If **NO**, train an appropriate action; put his hand on the car and push it, or put the doll or animal in his arms and rock it. Now re-administer the task.

Does he play appropriately after training? YES/NO

(b) **Can the child use familiar household objects correctly in play?**

Place in front of the child a hairbrush, comb, cup or hat.

Does he use the object appropriately? YES/NO
If **NO**, train an appropriate action and retest.

Does he use the object appropriately after training? YES/NO

(c) **Can the child play appropriately with toys that represent daily activities at home?**

Put in front of the child a teapot and cup
OR
bowl and spoon
OR
doll and bed.

Does he use the toys appropriately?	YES/NO
If **NO**, train an appropriate action and retest.	
Does he use the toys appropriately after training?	YES/NO

(d) **Does the child know how to play with books or paper and pencils?**

Put a book in front of the child
OR
a pencil/crayon and paper.

Does he know how to use the material correctly?	YES/NO
If **NO**, train appropriate behaviour and re-administer the task.	
Does he know how to use the material after training.	YES/NO

If the child passed 3-4 items on the first trial, you can move on to Chapter 5. If the child did not pass at least 2 items on the first trial, he needs more practice in turn-taking and imitation skills. If he was able to carry out only 2 actions correctly on the untrained trials, or up to 4 actions on the trained trial, then he needs more practice in this skill.

Train new skills in one play area first—then select further objectives from other toys and materials. To help the child learn play skills, you should follow the same procedures as were suggested for turn-taking and imitation. Model appropriate behaviour and encourage the child to do as you do. Involve him in the game. Don't withdraw from the game until you are sure the child can continue without you. Try to involve a few other more competent children so that the child has good models of play skills.

Suggestions for training

Many of the activities that are appropriate here can be carried out within a group setting. To teach a child to play appropriately, you should select an activity for the child from an area in the home or classroom that allows for relatively unstructured play e.g.

Indoors:	dolls corner tea parties, cooking blocks and cars
Outdoors:	water play outdoor blocks sand pit

In these areas, children are often left to play relatively independently. The child with problems in learning is sometimes unable to extend his play skills independently, and needs help to acquire more sophisticated strategies to use in his play. You will need to structure experiences in these areas to ensure that the child is learning appropriate ways of playing with materials and hearing appropriate sounds and words. Remember that children who fail to develop adequate play skills and speech may not attend to the language they hear. So you will need to model new actions that you want him to learn, while at the same time producing appropriate words for him to begin to associate with the activity. For example, if he does not play appropriately in the dolls corner or with blocks, set up a brief play session with the child alone or with a group of children in one of these play areas. Remember that the important points are:

1. The child needs to learn **how** to play appropriately with different materials and needs to hear clear models of appropriate words during his game.
2. Games should have a high interest level for the child. They should be played briefly each day (at least 5 minutes) preferably with one adult. The game should be repeated often enough for the child to learn the skills that have been targeted. If he becomes bored, vary the game or choose a new game. Try to repeat an activity often enough for him to learn, but do not continue it so long that it becomes a meaningless ritual.
3. Model appropriate actions for the child and encourage him to imitate you. Once he can do this, encourage him to carry out the actions without a model.
4. Comment on his actions, using simple, clear words. Try to limit your vocabulary to key words. Follow the child's lead as far as possible. Remember, the objective of these games is for the child to learn how to play appropriately with a range of materials.

Taking the next step

Once the child demonstrates that he can play appropriately with a variety of materials, shift your emphasis during unstructured games from the acquisition of appropriate play skills to play activities that are accompanied by sounds and early words. This transition will be discussed in the following chapter.

Conclusion

In this chapter suggestions were made for setting up a language program with a child who does not yet have the prerequisite skills of looking together, turn-taking and imitation, and appropriate play. Procedures were described for assessing a child's skills in each of these areas, and for setting up games and other activities for teaching these skills if necessary.

It is important to remember that children who appear to be more advanced in their development than this level, but who are having difficulty in acquiring speech, may in fact lack some of the early skills that are described in this chapter. It may seem inappropriate to consider working on these skills with a child who appears to be relatively competent and perhaps has a few recognizable words and phrases, but these skills are the foundations upon which language teaching is built. The child needs to be able to do these tasks if he is to learn language from you. So before you begin to expand the vocabulary and language use of a delayed child, check that he has these early skills and is willing to use them with you.

Finally, it should be noted again that while 'looking together' skills should precede the other skills included in this chapter, there is no fixed order in which the others should be learned. The sequence of looking together, followed by turn-taking, imitation and appropriate play was chosen because it had a logical order in terms of the teaching program. For example, play skills can be taught through turn-taking and imitation; so there is a good reason for teaching them first. However this order is not fixed and the sequence in which tasks are introduced to a child should be determined primarily in terms of both the child's and the teacher's interests and needs.

CHAPTER 5

Level 2

Preverbal Skills:

PERFORMATIVES AND PROTOWORDS

Before children begin to produce recognizable words, they usually acquire a range of sounds that they use consistently in relation to particular events or during specific activities. Sometimes the event associated with these sounds is easily recognized (e.g. 'tick-tock' for the clock, 'too-too' for a car) while other sounds that appear to be used consistently by the child have no recognizable meaning (e.g. 'ot', 'bah' produced in a wide variety of situations). These consistent sounds are important because they represent a definite stage that occurs after the child has acquired early turn-taking, imitation and play skills, and before he begins to produce a variety of clear words. Such sounds are sometimes called '**performatives**' and '**protowords**'.

Performatives refer to sounds produced by the child as part of an activity. For example, many children learn to vocalize 'br'm' while playing with toy cars, or will consistently say 'ee-ee' while playing with a model aeroplane. 'Boo' is a good example of a performative. These sounds are not used by the child to represent or indicate, but are simply part of the routine associated with a particular game or toy.

Some performative sounds are learned as part of the games played with an adult. For example 'boo' is learned as a key element in peek-a-boo. Children probably learn performative sounds earlier than words because these sounds are usually easy to produce, and because they are often expressed in an extenuated or repetitive form (e.g. quack quack, me-ow, woof woof, bang bang). Such sounds must stand out in the confusion of speech sounds that the child hears. Moreover, they are usually associated with events that involve movement and have high interest value for children.

Protowords are consistent sounds used like words by the child. Sometimes the child seems to have a private language when he has a range of protowords, but these 'words' are recognizable because they have some obvious association with the events they refer to. Some performative sounds become protowords, when the child uses the familiar sound to represent that event. Thus 'br'm' can come to be used to indicate a car in a picture or a car outside the gate. A repeated tongue click can be used to represent a horse (it sounds like trotting hooves), or 'boo' to request playing the game. Some protowords have no recognizable basis in the child's experience, but their meaning can be recognized if you observe when the child uses them. Sometimes the child uses the word in so many different contexts that it is impossible to discern any meaning in its use— it is almost as if he used it when he knew that a word was required— but did not know an appropriate word.

Some examples of commonly used protowords include:

Entity or Activity	**Protoword**
Mum, Dad, Granny	Mama, dad, nana
Food	Bickie, di (drink)
Bed, sleep	Ni-ni
Self	Bubee (child's name)
Ball	Ba
Dog	Bow wow
Clock	Ti-ti
Pointing, giving	De, da
Thanking	Ta
Going out	Ta-ta

While protowords do represent an early or immature form of language and can be used by a child to communicate successfully with another person, such words represent a primitive language system. They will not enable the child to communicate with people outside his immediate circle who do not share in his private language. Therefore it is important to encourage a child to substitute conventional word forms for his own protowords. Many children will make this transition without special help, provided they hear clear models of the conventional word forms and do not find that their idiosyncratic words are sufficient to convey their meaning to a listener. If your child has developed a number of protowords, you should try to provide him with a clear model of the conventional word forms. Also encourage him to use some performative sounds in imitation of you, since in learning such sounds he will also be learning to attend to and imitate the speech model that you can provide.

No suggestion is made for assessment of the child's use of **protowords**, since they are not included in the teaching objectives of this language program. However if you listen to your child and find out that he is using protowords make a list of them and their meaning. This will be useful for teaching first words (see Chapter 6).

Check to see if your child is using any **performatives**. Make a list of any sounds you hear and of the situations in which they occur. Here are some suggestions for assessing performatives. (A summary assessment form is included in Appendix C).

Suggested assessment activities:

Will the child produce an appropriate noise as part of a known game?

Does he do it spontaneously or does he only produce the sound in imitation?

(a) Play 'peek-a-boo'. Does the child say 'boo' when it is his turn? YES/NO

OR

Play 'ring-a-rosie'. Does the child say 'atishoo' or 'down'? YES/NO

If he did not say the word spontaneously, will he do so if you prompt him? YES/NO

(b) Set up a game with model cars or aeroplanes. Does the child make any sounds during his game? YES/NO

OR

Set up a game with a tea-set or doll. Does the child produce any sounds in association with particular actions in the game (e.g. eating or drinking noises)? YES/NO

If he did not produce these sounds spontaneously, will he do so if you prompt him? YES/NO

(c) If you set up a game with model animals, will the child produce appropriate sounds while playing with the models (e.g. woof-woof, moo, quack)? YES/NO

OR

Play with some musical instruments. Will the child produce appropriate sounds while playing with the instruments (e.g. bang-bang, too-too, tee-tee)? YES/NO

If he did not produce these sounds spontaneously, will he do so if you prompt him? YES/NO

If the child was able to make most of these sounds spontaneously, then you won't need to give him further practice. If he needed a model, then provide more opportunities for him to use these sounds. Remember that some children who are already using a few clear words do not like to produce performative sounds. However, children who are having difficulty using consistent sounds to communicate often can be helped to make a start by learning to produce these sounds in association with a familiar activity. Here are some ideas for activities you can use to introduce the child to performative sounds. You will need to model the sound yourself while taking part in the activity. Once the child is familiar with the sound encourage him to imitate you. Now try to find out if he is using the sound spontaneously during his play. Once he is using the sounds by himself and with others, you can anticipate substituting a word for those sounds. (See Chapter 6 for information about this development.)

Suggestions for training

All the activities listed in Chapter 4 for turn-taking, imitation and appropriate play can be used here. Refer to relevant sections of Chapter 4 for ideas. Choose activities that can include a sound, such as 'oops' and 'brm'. Here are some other ideas:

1. Activities associated with dolls, tea-sets, blocks and cars and other familiar household objects provide good opportunities for using performatives.

   Some appropriate activities and sounds are:

Activity	**Sound**
doll eat	smack lips or 'eat-eat-eat'
pour tea	continuous s-s-s noise
doll drink	click tongue or 'drink-drink-drink'
doll sleep	humming and rocking movement
car game	toot, br'm, crashing sound,
blocks fall	oh-oh
fire engine	oo-oo-ooo
train	choo choo

2. Model animals have been shown to be a particularly effective means of stimulating performative sounds. Use models of familiar animals that make a sound that the child can imitate. Some appropriate animals and sounds are:

	Animal	**Sound**
e.g.	dog	woof
	duck	quack
	donkey	ee-or
	cat	meow
	pig	oink
	turkey	gobble gobble
	cow	moo
	bird	tweet
	rooster	cock-a-doodle-do
	horse	tongue click
	bee/fly	bzz

Once the child knows a range of sounds, you should encourage him to use them during play with other materials, such as animal puzzles and picture books. Appropriate songs can also be taught. These are particularly effective if they can be sung in a group, e.g. 'Old MacDonald had a Farm'. Many children are more likely to produce such sounds if they can hear other children first.

3. Some children are interested in the sounds produced by musical instruments. You can introduce a child to these sounds during a game with appropriate instruments. For example:

Instrument	**Sound**
drum	bang bang
bells	ding dong
horn	beep beep
trumpet	toot toot
triangle	ting ting
tambourine	ring ring

Once the child is familiar with these sounds they can be included in action songs in which all the children join e.g. 'We can play on the kettle drum and this is the way we do it'.

4. You can use your imagination to find a sound that goes with other familiar toys and objects. For example:

Object	**Noise**
tree/wind	oo-oo
smoke	sh-sh
flower	sniff sniff
broom	swish swish
water	drip drip/glug-glug
something sticky	ugh/yuck
something good to eat	yum yum

When a child has learned some performative sounds, you should provide a variety of situations where he practises these sounds: Some useful games include using a 'gone' box, a surprise bag, a tunnel or a matching game.

To play the 'gone' box game, cut an opening in the top of a shoe box or a large vegetable box. Collect a sample of objects that you know the child associates with particular sounds (e.g. clock 'tick-tick'; car 'br'm'; cow 'moo'; toy horn 'toot toot'). Demonstrate to the child that the object can be posted in the opening **after** the appropriate sound is made. You will need to keep your hand over the opening, and only allow the child to post the object when he has made its sound. As you post the object, say 'gone' or 'bye bye'. Make the game fun. If the child does not make the appropriate sound after a few opportunities, then you model the task—make the sound and post the object. When all the objects are 'gone', lift the box, reassemble the objects and begin the game again. You can also play this game using pictures instead of objects.

Other games can be devised, to practise performatives. For example, make a tunnel out of cardboard or a cardboard cylinder. Slide a variety of toys or small objects, such as model cars, animals, keys, a comb, down the tunnel. Make an appropriate sound as the object disappears and reappears again, e.g.

whee
br'm
oo-oo
moo
whoo
boom
bang
crash

A similar game can be played with a surprise bag. Hide a set of familiar objects in a cloth bag or pillowslip. Let the child feel in the bag for an object and make its sound before he brings it out to show you. Alternatively, you can collect a set of pictures to match the objects. The child can match each object to a picture and make the appropriate sound. All of these games can be played individually or in a small group.

Taking the next step

Once the child has acquired some performatives you can begin to pair a clear word with these objects, so that he can learn to associate the word with the object. Once the child begins to use performatives spontaneously, you will find that he will gradually substitute words for his sounds. Now it is time for you to read the next chapter in the program, (Chapter 6), for an outline of procedures to use for helping a child begin to talk.

Conclusion

In this chapter the idea of performative sounds was introduced. This level is regarded as an important intermediate stage for the child who has the prerequisite skills of Level 1 (Chapter 4), but is not ready to produce recognizable words. Over time most children begin to substitute the word for the sound, thus moving from performative sounds into words. However experience with children who are having difficulty in learning to talk has shown that learning to produce performatives can provide a very useful bridge between meaningless babble and first words.

CHAPTER 6

Level 3

FIRST WORDS

Children usually communicate first by gestures, eye movements, facial expressions or other physical actions. If you watch a child carefully you often see such non-verbal communicative acts, though you may not have been aware that the child was communicating with you in this way. Gradually, children begin to include performative sounds with their actions and eventually learn to use words to convey their meaning more effectively to a listener.

Children's first communicative acts are usually related to real events that have a high level of interest for them (e.g. daddy's car, a passing aeroplane, the family pet). Later, the child learns to use gestures and words to make things happen or to obtain desired objectives. Detailed studies of children who are just beginning to talk have shown that they usually begin to use words to:

1. **Indicate** the existence of something that interests them.
2. **Obtain** objects and services that they want e.g. a toy, or help to climb onto a swing, and
3. **Regulate** other people's actions. This may include:
   (i) **Protest**—e.g. 'don't do that', 'no, not now'
   (ii) **Request attention**—e.g. 'watch me', 'come and play with me.'

Once the child begins to communicate with others using a few consistent gestures or sounds, opportunities can be provided to help him learn some useful words to use spontaneously in appropriate situations. This process can take place in structured play, turn-taking and imitation games, or in naturally-occurring situations during the day. However, before introducing games to stimulate early speech, find out what gestures and sounds the child is using already to communicate with people. The best way to do this is through unstructured observation. For example, ask a parent what words the child uses, watch the child carefully during his normal daily routines or take a language sample. You can also assess the child's ability to produce and imitate single words by using a structured activity.

Suggested assessment activities:
(a) **Unstructured observation:**

Make a list of the meanings the child is able to express through gestures, consistent sounds or recognizable words. This information can be collected in three ways:

1. **Parent Report**

   A parent or consistent caregiver can make a list of the gestures, sounds or words that they know the child uses.

2. **Systematic Observation**

   Over a period of several days write down all those gestures, sounds or words that you hear the child use to communicate. (Note the meaning of the item. If this is not obvious follow the clues you use to recognize whether the child was expressing some communicative meaning e.g. the child's actions and the activity in which the words, or gestures were used). (See Observation Record Forms, Appendix D).

3. **A Language Sample**

   Set up an activity the child likes, (e.g. teddy play, looking at a book) and play with him for about 5-10 minutes. Make a list of all the child's communicative gestures, sounds or words. A tape recorder is useful here, as it allows you to interact freely with the child during the activity. Again you should try to note any contextual clues that will help you to understand the child's meaning. (See Taking a Language Sample, Appendix A).

Having collected a list of the ways in which the child is currently communicating, categorize these items into five broad types of meaning:

1. **Personal names** (familiar people, family pets)
2. **Object labels** (real things, e.g. ball, car)
3. **Actions** (related to movement e.g. look, fall down)
4. **Modifiers** (related to conditions and states, e.g. more, hot)
5. **Other** (e.g. socially useful words, bye, no)

Record the words, sounds or gestures that your child uses on the First Words List (Summary Assessment Sheets, Level 3 (b)). Note if the meaning is expressed by

a gesture (G)	e.g. pointing
a sound (S)	e.g. 'br'm'
a word (W)	e.g. 'ball'.

Here is an example of one child's list.

JOHN'S WORD LIST (4 YRS. 3 MTHS.)

Names	**Objects**	**Actions**	**Modifers**	**Other**
Bubba (W)	car (S)	go (W)	wet (W)	gone (G)
Daddy (W)	hat (W)	hide (G)	hot (W)	no (G)
Mummy (W)		fall down (W)	more (G)	ta (W)
Spot (W)		put (G)		there (G)
		look (G)		

If you are not sure where to put a word, make a guess. This is **your** list and you should decide how to classify the words on it. You may find the Observation Record Form (Appendix D) a useful way to collect a list of the child's current language. With this procedure, record when a word was first used either in imitation or spontaneously, to whom the child was talking when he used it, what was going on at the time and what the child was trying to say. From this information you will have a good record of the words and the meanings that the child is communicating (whether he is using his words only to obtain objects and never to protest or attract attention) and to whom he talks most often (Granny or one particular helper at preschool). This information will be very useful when you are deciding what teaching objectives to select to teach.

(b) Structured Assessment:

Another useful way to assess a child's current language skill is to set up a simple activity in which the child has an opportunity to label spontaneously or imitate a label for a familiar object or event. This will give you useful information to supplement the list of words you have collected from parental reports and your own observations. Moreover, since an important element in your teaching strategy will include imitation of adult speech, this evaluation will help you to find out if the child can imitate a word that he has just heard. (A summary assessment form is included in Appendix C).

1. Spontaneous speech

a) Will the child label a familiar object as part of a game?

Use a 'surprise' bag game. Find a cloth bag (e.g. a pillowslip) or a large paper bag and collect four objects that should be familiar to the child. Let the child watch as you put each item into the bag. Label the items as you put them in. Now let the child feel in the bag for one of the objects. Before he takes it out, say 'What is it?' or 'What have you found?' Can the child tell you? If he cannot label the object, let him take it out of the bag and look at it. Ask again 'What is it?' Repeat with the other objects. Your objective here is to find out if he can label four familiar objects.

Some appropriate objects could include:

ball
car
cup
spoon
shoe
doll (baby)
hat
key
fruit (apple, banana)

Use any object that you know interests the child.

Did he label all or some of the four objects in the bag? YES/NO

b) Will the child label a familiar object in a picture book?

Find a set of pictures or a picture book that includes objects or people that are familiar to the child. Sit beside him and look at the pictures. Ask 'What's that' or 'Who is that'. Try to record any words the child says. Did he label up to four of the pictures appropriately? YES/NO

2. Imitated speech

Will the child imitate a model of an appropriate word during an activity with an adult?

Repeat the 'surprise' bag game described earlier, but this time use four objects that you think the child may recognize but cannot already label. As he takes each item out of the bag, give him an opportunity to label it himself. Ask 'What is it?' If he cannot reply, model an appropriate word. Say 'It's a __________'. Then encourage him to repeat the word. Say 'You say__________'. Remember that your objective here is to find out if the child will imitate your words.

For this activity you should select objects that have names that are relatively easy for the child to say—some suitable objects for this activity could include:

bell
bird
bath
truck
train
comb
cow
pig
pom pom
mop
mat
owl

You could include any other objects that may interest the child. Try to select items that have only one syllable and begin with a consonant or vowel sound that you know the child can say. Record what the child says.

Did he imitate up to four of the words that you modelled? YES/NO

OR

Will the child imitate a model of an appropriate word while looking at a book with an adult?

Find a set of four pictures or a picture book that includes objects that the child cannot already label. Repeat the procedure that was described in the previous activity. Try to elicit the word from the child and if he cannot say an appropriate word, model it for him and encourage him to imitate you.

Did he imitate up to four of the words that you modelled? YES/NO

If the child was able to label at least two of the items spontaneously, then he is probably ready to learn to use more words. If he was able to imitate at least two of the words he heard in the imitation task, then he has appropriate skills for taking part in the language training activities that are outlined in the remaining sections of this chapter. If he was not able or willing to imitate you, then you may need to read the Turn-taking and Imitation section in Chapter 4. (Program Level 1).

Suggestions for Training

Once you have identified precisely how and what the child is communicating, you can decide what to teach him. If most of the list you have made comprises gestures, look at the previous chapter (Chapter 5) that lists ways of helping the child to produce performative sounds. This is sometimes a useful bridge for a child who has acquired a range of gestures to express his meaning but does not use many clear words. If he has a very rich collection of gestures and is communicating quite involved information through them, but lacks clear words, you may decide to include some standard signs in your language objectives. These can provide a useful supplement for the child who wants to communicate meaning but has been unable to learn to say clear words. The use of signs to supplement speech is discussed later in Chapter 10.

The strategy suggested to help your child begin to produce new words derives from skills acquired during turn-taking and imitation games. In these games he learned to watch and copy actions and sounds.

Children who have problems learning to talk need

1. clear models of the word
2. opportunities to practise the word without a model.

The child needs to be **reminded** of an appropriate word to use in a particular situation, needs to **hear** a model of the word that he can copy, but then needs to have an **opportunity** to use the word **without a model**, soon after he has practised it and before he forgets it. This has been called the **Conversation-Imitation-Conversation** (or C-I-C) strategy. It is described more fully in **Ready, Set Go: Talk to Me**, D.S. Horstmeier & J.D. MacDonald, Charles E. Merrill. Ohio 1978.

The C-I-C—strategy has 3 parts:

1. Conversation I (C_1)
2. Imitation (I)
3. Conversation 2 (C_2)

Here is an example of the C-I-C strategy in use:

(Jane washing doll in home corner)

C_1	Teacher:	Jane: what's happening?
	Child:	no reply
I	Teacher:	Jane: say 'wash'
	Child:	'wash'
C_2	Teacher:	Jane: what's happening?
	Child:	'wash'

In this sequence, the teacher first gives the child an opportunity to produce an appropriate word correctly. If she can't, the teacher provides a model and encourages her to imitate. Once she can do this, the teacher repeats the original question, again giving her an opportunity to use the word without a model. **N.B. It**'s very important to remember that you should never ask a child to imitate or say a word more than 3 times. Always avoid confrontation. If she doesn't respond, leave this word and try again tomorrow. If she refuses to attempt the word over about two weeks, then drop the word and find another one to try to teach **or** go back to an earlier level, e.g. imitation of sounds.

Selecting new words to teach

To teach a child new words, first identify which words will be useful for him to learn. Next, select an enjoyable activity which provides opportunities for you and the child to use the targeted words. Then use the C-I-C strategy to help him to learn to use the words you have selected. A resource list of words to teach at the single word level is appended (Appendix E).

Children need to acquire a variety of words from the five categories listed earlier. At first they will need words mainly to label objects and familiar people, a few action words and some modifiers. Socially useful words also need to be acquired but these are usually learned during the child's daily activities, and often do not need to be taught.

Which words should you choose to teach first?

Most children begin to talk using labels for things that interest them very much. For example, many children say 'car' or 'plane' first. Look at the list you have made of your child's gestures, sounds and words. It's a good idea to start with these. If the child is communicating some meaning without using a proper word, choose an appropriate word for this meaning and put it on your list of words to train. This may include words for objects that are important to the child, for familiar people, actions or modifier words. Make a list of up to 10 target words, including a few that the child already knows, as 'success' items, to help ensure that he feels happy about the activity that you're both involved in. Now decide how to teach the words. Some can be taught during daily routines. For example, 'out' can be taught when it is time to go outside to play; 'come' or 'look' can be taught when the child tugs at an adult's clothing and indicates that he wants attention or help. Other words, like 'car', 'ball', 'baby' can be taught in a game.

Games and activities for teaching single words

Having decided which words you will try to teach the child, choose a game or daily activity where the words can be used. Some ideas for appropriate games or activities are listed below. If you decide to carry out your teaching objective in a game, then collect any materials needed and make a list of the target words. You may decide to monitor what happens during the game by using a data collection sheet like the one included in Appendix B. If you decide to carry out your teaching during naturally occurring daily routines, you may still find it useful to use a data collection sheet to record what happens each day for each target word. Now you are ready to begin teaching.

Setting up a teaching game

Set up a teaching situation with the materials you plan to use, or look for an appropriate situation to occur during the day. Play with the materials, follow the child's lead, and when appropriate introduce a C-I-C sequence with each target word. You may need to ensure first that the child associates the word you want to teach with the object or event it signifies. To do this provide him with opportunities to hear the word and associate it with some specific objective, e.g. Ask 'where's mum', 'look, mum' or 'show me mum' before you introduce the C-I-C strategy.

C_1	Teacher:	'Who's that?'	(pointing to a picture of Mum)
	Child:	no reply	
I	Teacher:	Say 'mum'	
	Child:	'mu'	
C_2	Teacher:	'Who's that?	
	Child:	'mu'	
	Teacher:	'Yes, it's Mum'	

Keep a record of what the child says for each item on your list. Once he can produce a correct sound (or approximation for it) in the C_1 condition over about 3 consecutive days, you can probably drop that item from your list and select another word to teach. Now tell everyone who has contact with the child that he can say 'mum' and make opportunities for him to use the word when appropriate.

N.B. Remember the **golden rules** for helping a child begin to talk are:

(a) **Encourage the child to respond** at an appropriate time

(b) **Ask only three times**

(c) **Avoid confrontation** or a strong demand to respond.

Here are some ideas for activities to use in teaching a child to use new words.

1. **Teaching names of family members, pets.** Check your list of the child's words. Does he use 3-4 words for family members or pets? YES/NO

   If **NO**, here are some ideas of ways to teach him to use these words.

   (a) Play a game like 'Here we go round the mulberry bush' with other children or family members. Let the child call the name of the next person to model an action for the group to copy.

   (b) Use model people from Lego or a doll's house. Play with the models, label them, and use the C-I-C strategy.

   (c) Use 2-dimensional models, e.g. cut-out figures, Invicta Logic People.

   (d) Draw faces on your finger tips. Say 'where's daddy?'. Hide a finger and find it again.

   (e) Collect pictures or photographs from home and put them in an album. Look at the pictures and label them.

   (f) Cut out pictures from magazines with the child and label them appropriately.

   Note that these ideas follow a sequence from concrete to increasingly abstract and two-dimensional.

2. **Teaching names of familiar objects, e.g. ball, hat, car.**

   Check your list of the child's words. Does he use 8-10 names of familiar objects? YES/NO

   If **NO**, here are some ideas of ways to teach him to use these words.

   When you begin to teach word labels, check first that the child knows the meaning of the words you plan to teach. Before playing a game, ask the child to show you, give you, or touch the items as you label them. If he is not sure of the meaning of the words, you will need to give him plenty of opportunities to associate the word sound with the object. Follow the steps outlined earlier for teaching family names. Here are some suggestions for games to play:

   (a) Use **real** objects that interest the child. Put them in a box or bag. Let him take one object at a time, but encourage him to name the object as he takes it.

   (b) Collect **a set of pictures** to match the real objects you are teaching. Let the child match object to picture as he labels it.

   (c) Make a **'gone'** box—a box with a hole in the lid big enough to allow the child to 'post' the object or a picture. Only let the child 'post' an object when he has labelled it.

   (d) Find a **simple picture lotto** with familiar objects. Have the child name the picture before he puts it on the board. This is a useful game for including a peer, who will provide a good language model for the child.

   (e) Looking at a **book** provides a good opportunity for talking. Collect the object pictures you used in (b) and mount them in a picture book or use clear plastic covers that can be clipped together. The child should name the object before he turns the page.

When you're selecting labels to teach the child, remember two important points. **First**, try to find words for objects and events that are relevant and of interest to him. Look at the environment from **his** point of view, and give him words that **he** will find useful. Remember that things that move, make a noise and are colourful, interest children. So look for ideas among these types of experiences. A sample list of words to teach is included in Appendix E.

Second, try to select words that the child will not find too difficult to say. Listen to the sounds he is already making and select words that include these sounds. You should note, however, that children who can make a particular sound during vocal play (e.g. 'f') may not be able to make that sound at will. So listen before you select a word to teach. A list of the order of acquisition of consonants for most children is included in Appendix G.

3. **Teaching words for actions.**

Check your list of the child's words. Does he have up to 10 action words?

YES/NO

If **NO**, here are some suggestions for teaching action words:

Action words are important because the child needs these to make simple sentences. However, because these words lack a physical form, they are often difficult to learn. Many children begin to say a number of word labels but are very slow to use words for actions. If a child has 30-50 label words, it is time for him to acquire some actions words as well. To teach these words, you should start by pairing a word to a gesture used by the child to communicate an action meaning. For example, many children express 'come', 'want', 'look', 'out', 'all gone' in their gestures and body language long before they use a word. Use the C-I-C strategy to help the child learn to use the words. Here are some ideas for teaching a child to use action words.

Set up a game involving activities appropriate for the words that you want to teach. Structure the game so that the child has to name an activity before doing it or as he sees you do it. Use the C-I-C strategy. Suitable games include:

(a) Have a **tea party** with a teddy or doll or play with blocks and cars. Label the actions as you play: eat, put, drink, go, stop, crash, bang.

(b) Look at a **picture book of actions**, adults or children engaged in various activities. Label the actions: sleep, eat, wash, run, jump, sweep, cut.

(c) Follow the leader. Let a small group of children play with you each taking turns to name an action. Play 'There we go round the mulberry bush'.

(d) Play **charades**—one person mimes the desired action and the other children guess the action being mimed.

Action words can also be taught during normal daily activities. For example:

(a) Ask a child what he is doing or what he is about to do. Using the C-I-C strategy, you can teach words like:

cut, paste, ride, dig,
cook, eat, drink, wash.

(b) Once the child is able to say a few clear action words appropriately without an immediate model (i.e. C_2 in the C-I-C sequence) use a **binary choice** question to provide some assistance in producing a correct word. Ask 'Do you want to cut or paste?' 'Do you want to build or climb?' This will help the child who is not quite ready to answer such questions spontaneously.

4. **Teaching modifier words e.g. hot, wet, more, big.**

   Modifier words can all be taught in games similar to those described earlier. The child will need plenty of opportunities to hear these words in association with the condition they represent before he will begin to use them. Most children learn some modifiers early—including words like wet, hot, big. Others are only learnt after the child has a number of words for entities and actions. Some suitable words to teach could include: colour names (red, blue, yellow), prepositions (in, on, under) and adjectives (little, my, more).

5. **Teaching socially useful words.**

   These are usually taught during appropriate daily activities. Many children learn 'bye' first. As a general rule, it is wise not to teach a child with delayed language to use words like 'ta', 'please' or 'thank you' until the child is using sentences with three or more words. These words convey no information and if the child is only capable of using one or two words at a time, the use of 'please' or 'thank you' takes the place of a word which may convey more of the child's meaning, e.g. 'juice' rather than 'please' or 'ta'. Try to keep such polite phrases for a later stage, when the child is able to use them in addition to the words that carry useful information. However, you should teach 'bye' and 'hi' or 'hello'. These words can help the child to begin to interact rewardingly with the people he meets.

Signs as a supplement to speech

There is some evidence that certain children can be helped to learn words, particularly action words, if a gesture or sign is paired with the word by the adult who uses the word with the child. Object labels are usually associated very closely in time with the objects they represent, and the sight of the object itself helps in the process by which the child learns to associate a particular sound pattern with one particular object. Initially children only talk about objects that are present. Only later, as they grow more skilled, can they talk about objects that are not present. We often pair a word that has no clear visual referent (e.g. look, come, stop) with a gesture that helps make explicit the meaning that we wish to convey. Initially this helps children, or non-English speakers, for example, understand what we are saying. In teaching children to use such words, the learning process may be facilitated if a clear gesture or sign is consistently or consciously paired with the word. This visual cue helps the child in the early stages to associate a particular sound pattern with a specific, non-concrete referent. Over time, the child is able to understand the meaning of the sound pattern without its visual cue, just as he is able to recognize the meaning of an object label, without the object itself being in sight.

So one strategy that may help you teach some words to a child, particularly words for objects that cannot always be physically present (e.g. toilet, bus, plane) or words for actions (come, look, dig) or attributes (red, little) is to pair a gesture or sign with the word. The child may learn to use the gesture or sign first, but later he will use the word only to convey his meaning to a listener. For a more detailed discussion of the use of signs in language acquisition see Chapter 10.

Helping the child learn to use words effectively

Earlier in this chapter, it was suggested that children normally use words first to **indicate** the existence of something that interests them very much—an aeroplane overhead or a butterfly in the garden. Later they use words to **obtain** objects (toys, food or help to get on to a swing), or to **regulate** and control other people's actions, by protesting ('stop', 'don't do that') or requesting attention from an adult ('watch me', 'come and see this'). As the child acquires a range of single words, you may like to check the uses described here. If he is not yet using words in these three ways, you may need to teach him appropriate words and how to use them.

In the early stages of a language intervention program, the major objective is to extend the number of words that the child uses. However it is also important to check that the child is using the words that he knows in many different ways, not just to label objects or people. If you are concerned about a child's use of language, read the section in Chapter 8 on **Communicative Intentions**, in which procedures are described which will ensure that this wider use of language will occur in children who are only just beginning to talk.

Points to remember when teaching first words

Whatever words you select to teach, here are some important points to remember in teaching first words.

1. Make sure the child **understands** what is expected of him during the activity or game. Make sure he knows the 'rules'.
2. Make sure the child **associates** a new word with the appropriate activity, before you expect him to use the word. Provide plenty of opportunities for him to hear the word in conjunction with an experience of the activity.
3. In setting up a list of words to teach, make sure you include a few words that he can already say. These help ensure that the child **feels successful** during the training session.
4. **Do not expect** the child to learn all the items on your list at one time. It may take several sessions before he attempts a new word and may only learn 2 or 3 new words at a time.
5. Give the child **many opportunities** to practise new words.
6. Remember to **accept any attempt** by the child to say new words. As the child practises the words, his speech should become clearer.
7. **Keep teaching games short.** Do not expect the child to continue playing if he becomes bored or tired. Several short productive sessions are far more effective than one long one.
8. If the child **does not attempt** to use a word after several training sessions, you may need to drop that item and select another word to teach.
9. Make sure the child is given **ample opportunity** to practise new words during normal daily activities. Remember that sometimes this is the only way that you can teach new words. Some suitable times are:
    (a) **at meal and snack times**—ask the child to say 'more', 'eat' or 'juice' before he is given something to eat or drink.
    (b) **in the bathroom**—ask the child to say 'wash' or 'on' before turning on the tap or washing hands, 'soap' before taking the soap.
    (c) **during dressing and undressing**—ask the child to label items of clothing he is putting on or taking off. Say 'up'/'off' as he pulls pants/socks on or off.

Taking the next step

Children who have been slow to learn to talk often prefer to communicate using single words only, or in some instances phrases associated with daily routines or rituals (e.g. 'there y'are', 'cuppa tea', 'ready-set-go'). So it is important that once the child is using a variety of types of words in different situations, you should move on to the next level in the Language Program (Level 4). This is concerned with helping the child combine his single words into phrases and sentences.

Conclusion

In this chapter procedures were outlined for helping the child who is not yet using words or who has a very restricted vocabulary, to acquire a variety of words and learn to use them in different ways, as a means of satisfying his own needs and establishing an effective communicative relationship with the people who comprise his social group. It is an exciting development when a language delayed child begins to use recognizable words spontanteously, exciting for both the child and his caretakers, who then have a powerful tool for sharing information and experiences. This represents a very important level in the sequence of stages that leads to the acquisition of effective language skills.

CHAPTER 7

Level 4

COMBINING WORDS INTO SENTENCES

Once the child has 10 to 20 words for people and objects, and 5 to 10 action or other types of words, you may begin to hear him combine his words into simple sentences such as 'more, Mum' or 'boy there'. These early sentences directly reflect the child's perception of events around him, and tend to take a form that describes:

> an object of interest, plus a comment about it, e.g. 'bird gone' 'dolly eat' 'truck there', or
>
> an object of interest plus a word that refers to something associated with that object, e.g. 'Daddy spoon' 'more bickie' 'go car'.

Once the child is using single words with meaning, you can help him begin to combine some of his words into simple sentences.

Putting words together

Research has shown that when children begin to combine words, they are expressing their understanding of relationships they perceive to exist between objects and people in their environment. In combining words into simple phrases and sentences, they appear to follow common rules. For example, a child who uses 'Mum' and 'up', might at first use 'Mum up' (to say Mum pick me up), then 'Mum pick up', and later 'Mum, pick me up'. The order in which the words are combined reflects the child's perception of the relationship between the events that he has labelled. In the case of the statement 'Mum up', the child first labelled 'Mum', as the agent involved and then labelled 'up', as the action or event that Mum would be instrumental in effecting.

Children usually combine labelling words (nouns) and action words (verbs) first. A few location words might then be added (e.g. 'there') and possibly some modifiers (e.g. 'big' 'blue'). Often, one has to consider the situation or context in which the phrase was spoken in order to know what the child means. For example 'Dad car' could mean 'Dad's car' or 'Dad drives the car' or 'Dad is in the car'. Knowing the context is crucial for understanding the child's meaning.

Here are **ten rules** that children usually follow when they begin to string words together. These tend to be acquired in the same order by most children. The rules are:

Rule	Example
1. Agent + Action	e.g. mum sleep
2. Action + object	e.g. push car
3. Agent + object	e.g. mummy (gives) bickie
4. Modifier (possession) + object label	e.g. daddy car, my doll
5. Modifier (recurrence) + object label	e.g. more bickie
6. Modifier (attribution) + object label	e.g. big car

7. Agent/object + location e.g. car there
8. Action + location e.g. fall down
9. Negation + any word e.g. no want, no bickie
10. Introducer + any word e.g. bye mum, see train

Once children have begun to use a variety of single words, they usually start to string words together spontaneously. However experience has shown that children who have had difficulties in acquiring first words are also slow to use simple phrases and sentences. Therefore, this chapter provides guidelines for helping children move from a single word stage to the production of two- and three-word phrases and sentences. As in the preceding chapters, suggestions are made for assessing the child's current language skills using both unstructured observation and structured games. Strategies are then described that can be used to help children begin to combine their words and thus move to a higher level in the language development sequence.

Suggested assessment activities:

(a) Unstructured observation

The three procedures (parent report, systematic observation and language sampling) that were described in the previous chapter for assessment of the child at the single word stage can be used again to evaluate the language of the child who is beginning to combine words. However this time you will be looking for evidence of the rules that the child is expressing, rather than for a list of the words that he uses, as in the assessment you carried out at the one word stage.

1. **Parent Report**

Ask a parent or guardian to make a list of any utterances that the child produces that include two words or more. If possible, ask for a list of at least twenty phrases or sentences. You may suggest the use of the Observation Record Form for 2-, 3- or more word phrases (Appendix D,). This will provide you with useful information to help you recognize the meaning intended by the child when he produced each utterance. You can then classify each utterance in terms of the rule that is expressed. For example, here is a list that was collected by Jane's mother. Her teacher classified each two-word utterance in terms of the 10 rules listed earlier in this chapter.

Jane's list

Utterance	Rule Number
Daddy car	3 (agent + object)
go car	2 (action + object)
blue car	6 (modifier + object)
me go	1 (agent + action)
me there	7 (agent + location)
go down	8 (action + location)
me down	7 (agent + location)

2. **Systematic observation**

During normal activities with the child, record any two-word or longer utterances that you hear him produce. Use the Observation Record Form for 2-, 3- or more word phrases (Appendix D). When you have collected at least twenty utterances you can classify them in terms of the rules that are being expressed.

3. **A language sample**

Collect a sample of the child's speech by tape recording him during a 5-10 minute play session. Choose two different sets of materials for the child to explore; for example a set of doll's house materials and a picture book or card game. You can analyse the taped language sample using the procedures described in Appendix A. Each two-word utterance produced by the child can be classified in terms of the 10 rules listed earlier.

From the information collected by any or all the procedures described here, you will have clear information about the rules that the child is using now. This will enable you to plan which rules you should begin to teach him to use next.

(b) **Structured assessment**

While you will probably be able to find out which two-word rules the child is expressing from the unstructured observational procedures just described, you may also try to elicit some two-word combinations through structured activities, such as a game with pictures.

Will the child label a picture using two words?

Collect a variety of pairs of pictures that have objects, people or animals that the child will recognize and can name. Try to find pairs of pictures that differ on at least one attribute: e.g.

a red car and a blue car
a bird in a tree and in a cage
a girl's dress and a baby's dress
a glass full of milk and an empty glass
a boy eating and a boy asleep
a man in a car and a man in a boat
a woman sitting and a woman standing

If possible collect pictures that represent each of the 10 rules.

Spread out some of the pictures, in pairs, between you and the child. Say: 'Let's play a game. We can each have a turn and take a picture. I'm going to start. 'I want the **blue** car.' Take the picture with the blue car and begin your pile. Now say to the child 'Your turn. You say which one you want.' Prompt if necessary. Encourage the child to select a picture. If he does not label it using two words, provide a model. Say 'you say, **Mum eat**.' Accept any utterances but encourage the child to use two words. Put your fingers on the picture until the child attempts to say something. If he does not speak after 3 prompts, you say the two words and let him take the picture. Now have your turn. Continue until all the pictures are gone. Record all relevant child utterances. You may find it appropriate to use a tape recorder for this. The object of the game is to elicit a variety of two-word utterances from the child. As in the unstructured observation tasks described earlier, you can classify all the child's utterances in terms of the 10 rules listed earlier.

Did the child produce any two-word utterances? YES/NO

Once you have collected information about the two-word utterances that the child has produced, tabulate these results to show which rules he has learned and which he does not yet appear to have mastered. A checklist for recording the two-word rules used by the child is appended (Appendix C.). Here is some information on the rules that Jane used during both unstructured observations and the structured picture games.

	Rules	Number of instances	Percentage of use
1.	agent + action	15	32%
2.	action + object	12	26%
3.	agent + object	6	13%
4.	modifier (possession) + object	2	4%
5.	modifier (recurrence) + object	0	—
6.	modifier (attribution) + object	0	—
7.	agent/object + location	4	8%
8.	action + location	8	17%
9.	negation + any word	0	—
10.	introducter + any word	0	—

Jane is using mainly the agent + action and action + object rules.

A few examples of agent + object, modifier (possession and recurrence) + object and agent + location were observed, but no instances of the other four rules occurred in Jane's assessments. In a remedial language program, Jane would probably first be encouraged to use the agent + action and action + object rules more. However, to do this she will need a variety of agent, action and object words. Does she need to increase the number of these words that she knows? The following sections of this chapter describe procedures that can be used to develop a program for helping a child like Jane to use more two-word sentences.

Suggestions for training

First find out if the child is expanding the meaning of the single words that he is using, by adding a gesture or other action. For example, the child who is pulling his toy car away from another child and shouting 'car', whilst pointing to himself, is trying to indicate possession. He could be trained to use 'my car' (Rule 4: modifier (possession) + object). The child who wants you to throw, roll or kick the ball, and merely gestures whilst saying 'ball', could be trained to use 'kick ball' (Rule 3: action + object). However, try to introduce only one rule at a time, as each one is a new skill for the child to master. If you are not sure which rule to introduce first, follow the order of the rules listed above. Most children use Rule 1 (Agent + Action) and Rule 2 (Action + Object) first.

Games for teaching early sentences

A child can be helped to combine words during normal daily activities, or during games with objects or pictures. For example, during regular play periods, encourage him to label what he is doing, or what he wants to do, by using a two-word sentence, instead of just one word. Prompt, by asking him to tell you what he is doing or what he wants to do; for example:

Adult	Child
'What are you doing?'	ride bike (action-object)
'What do you want to do?'	cut paper
	feed dolly
	brush hair

Structured games for using 2-word sentences

You can help a child put two words together by setting up games that include opportunities for the child to label two concurrent events that represent one of the early rules. For example, the child could play with the 'gone' box that was described in Chapter 5. Collect a set of objects that you know the child can label, and a box that is big enough to hold them. Cut a hole in the top of the box big enough to fit the objects into, and let the child post each object in the hole. As he puts it in, he must label the object, and as it disappears, he should say 'gone'. In this way he can learn to say 'cup gone', 'spoon gone', 'teddy gone' as each object is posted. As an alternative, he can learn to say 'bye cup', 'bye spoon', 'bye teddy' as the objects disappear. You will need to prompt him at first by modelling the correct words, and once he has learned the rules of the game, you should not let him post the object until he has said the two words appropriately.

To train the agent-action rule, collect a series of pictures that show one agent (e.g. a boy) in a variety of action situations. Look at the pictures with the child; ask 'what's happening?' Use the C-I-C strategy to elicit a two-word response. Introduce another agent word using a different set of pictures. Try to select general agent words that the child can use in many situations, but you can also encourage him to use the names of familiar people (daddy, mummy, nanna, etc.). Once he appears to be able to use these 2-word phrases during the learning games without a model (i.e. in the C_1 situation), listen carefully to see whether he is also using them in his environment in novel, untrained situations. If he does, then he has mastered the rule. Now you can select another rule and begin to teach its use.

Taking the next step

When the child is using most of the rules within 2-word sentences some of his utterances can be extended into 3- or 4-word sentences. For instance, the child using 'push car' and 'boy push' could be moved on to produce 'boy push car', or the child saying 'mummy go' could be encouraged to say 'mummy go car' or 'mummy go home'. The important point to remember is that children can be encouraged to extend their early sentences to include another element, following the sequence listed earlier for the 2-word utterances e.g.

agent-action-object	boy push car
agent-action-location	boy go there
action-modifier-object	push big car
negation, action-object	no push car

Conclusion

There is some evidence that children who have been delayed in producing first words will show further delay in combining words into simple phrases and sentences. Procedures were described in this chapter for assessing the language and communication skills of a child who is using single words, and for helping him begin to express his meaning in more complex phrases and sentences. The language rules usually acquired first by children learning to talk were identified and games and other activities were suggested for helping children incorporate these rules into their spontaneous language.

Once the child begins to produce three- or four-word utterances, you will need to consider two additional aspects of his language: the communicative intentions expressed through words and the use of morphemes. These two issues are considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 8

Level 5

EXTENDING MEANING

Once the child is consistently using 2-,3- or more word sentences in social conversation, it is time to check two other important aspects of his language—

(a) his communicative intentions—**why** he uses language.

(b) his morphology—how he **extends his meaning** to show, for example, tense, mood and number.

A. COMMUNICATIVE INTENTIONS

Children with delayed language seem to use words initially in two ways: to label or name objects or events that interest them and to answer questions that are directed to them. They seem to initiate conversations less frequently than their non-delayed peers. So once the child has begun to combine words into simple sentences, you should check to see how he is using his language, to ensure that he is acquiring the range of communicative intentions or pragmatic functions that are evident in the speech of children who are developing normally.

Current evidence suggests that, in the early stages of development, children express eight main types of intention in their communicative acts. As suggested in Chapter 6, the first three functions (to indicate, to obtain and to regulate) usually appear early in the child's development and are expressed through a variety of actions, gestures and sounds. Once the child becomes more competent in language and begins to combine words into simple sentences, he learns to use his words in a greater variety of ways (e.g. to initiate, to obtain and give information, to discover new words and to answer questions). The eight categories of intention expressed by children learning to talk are outlined below:

1. **To indicate** existence of people, objects or events, e.g. 'look at________', or 'there' plus pointing. This skill provides the child with a means of introducing a topic of conversation with another person. It can be called learning 'to refer' or 'to predicate' and involves the child engaging another person in joint activity by directing his or her attention to some topic nominated by the child.
2. **To obtain** desired objects or services e.g. 'want________', or 'me________'. With this skill the child is able to use an adult as a means to achieve some desired objective, such as winding-up a clockwork train, or stretching up to get a toy that is out of reach.
3. **To regulate** other people's actions, including:

protest	'stop'
rejection	'no', 'don't' and
requesting attention	'look at me'

The child who has acquired this skill is able to influence the behaviour of another person in relation to himself. Once the child can regulate other people's actions, he has the potential to control what happens to him.

4. **To initiate, maintain or terminate** social interaction, including:

greetings	'hi', 'hello'
taking a turn in a conversation	'yes, me too'
farewells	'bye', 'see you'

This is a critical skill. The child must acquire strategies by which he can take part in social exchanges with other people, since it is through such interactions that much of his learning will occur.

5. **To obtain information by asking questions**, such as:

'where ________?'
'what ________?'
'who ________?'
'how ________?'
'why ________?'

This is an important skill that is usually acquired after the child has begun to use longer sentences (4 words or more).

6. **To discover new words** e.g. 'what is ________ called?' This is a special form of the preceding skill (to obtain information). When the child learns to ask questions of this type, he is demonstrating an understanding of language as a system of signs and symbols. Again this skill is probably acquired after he has begun to produce more complex sentence forms.

7. **To give information** e.g. 'that's a ________'. A child who can use his language to express this function is well advanced in his communication development, since this represents a skill that is used by a person who is functioning as an active participant in a social situation.

8. **To answer questions** e.g. 'yes, I want one'. This is an important use of language, since children need to be able to respond appropriately to questions directed to them. When they can use language in this way, they are demonstrating that they have acquired some of the most important elements in the acquisition of language, including knowledge of the rules involved in
    - taking turns with a partner in a dyadic exchange (eye contact, proximity, waiting for a turn, responding at the correct time).
    - recognizing the meaning intended by the speaker in asking the question.
    - understanding that an appropriate response should be produced; keeping to the topic.

Learning to use language in these ways is an important aspect of learning to talk. So when working with a language-delayed child, you should check to see if he is using language to express these functions. If he does not appear to be able to use language in each of these ways, you should devise situations in which he can learn to express these communicative intentions. You can assess a child's use of language by unstructured observational procedures, such as were described in earlier chapters, or by setting up structured tasks designed to elicit use of the language functions that you expect the child to be able to express. Procedures for assessing the child's use of language are outlined in the following section of this chapter and strategies are described that can be used to help a child expand the range of intentions that he is able to communicate.

Suggested assessment activities:

Children need to learn **to use their communication skills to convey their meaning or intention to another person**. Check if your child is using his skills to express the language functions that have been observed in children learning to talk.

(a) **Unstructured Observation**

Observe the child in a natural setting to find out if he is using his language to communicate any of the intentions listed earlier. If necessary, ask his parents, or other adults who know him well, if he is using his language in any of these ways. A checklist, including a description of the eight communication intentions that you should expect to observe, is appended (Appendix C.).

(b) **Structured Assessment**

Since the expression of communicative intentions is totally under the control of the child, it can be very difficult to devise situations in which these behaviours will be elicited. Some suggestions for structured situations that may trigger two of these behaviours in a child are presented here. However, you may find that the child will not react in the way you expect because he does not want to, rather than because he has not learned to produce that type of behaviour.

Only two communicative intentions are included in these assessment tasks because the remaining six types involve behaviours that are difficult to elicit within a structured situation.

Here are some suggestions for eliciting the production of the first two of the intentionally communicative acts listed earlier. For each task, note if the child used an action, gesture, sound or word to communicate his intention.

1. **To indicate**

Can the child demonstrate the skill of indication? Will he point to people, objects or events with the intention of focussing the attention of another person on something that interests him?

Will the child attempt to indicate something to an adult?

(a) Sit down with the child at a table. While you are preparing to play a game, accidentally push an object off the table. Ignore the incident. Does the child draw your attention to the fallen object? YES/NO

If **yes**, how did he communicate? ________
(action, gesture, sound, word)

(b) At the end of an activity, pack everything you have used into a box and by accident leave one item out.

Does the child draw your attention to the forgotten object? YES/NO

If **yes**, how did he communicate? ________
(action, gesture, sound, word)

If the child responded appropriately in either situation, you may conclude that he knows how to indicate something to another person.

2. **To obtain**

Can the child demonstrate an appropriate skill to obtain something that he wants, using an adult partner as a tool?

Will the child attempt to obtain the assistance of an adult to get something that he wants?

(a) Collect four small toys that will interest a child. Put each one into a clear container with a lid which the child will have difficulty in opening without help.

Put the four containers in front of the child. Help him open the first one and get the toy. Now indicate to him that he can open the remaining containers. When he has difficulty with the second container, leave him to try to open it, then offer to help. When you have helped him open the second container, indicate that he should get the other two toys out of their containers. This time do not offer to help unless the child makes some action, gesture or sound to obtain your help.

Does the child try to obtain your help? YES/NO

If **yes**, how did he communicate? ________
(action, gesture, sound, word)

(b) Put four gold stars or other attractive stamps into four small squares of paper or cardboard. Put each square into a container with a lid that is difficult to open. Follow the same procedure as in the previous task. Tell the child that he can take the stars/stamps home.
Does the child try to obtain your help? YES/NO

If **yes**, how did he communicate? ________
(action, gesture, sound, word)

If the child responded appropriately in either situation, you may conclude that he knows how to obtain help from another person.

Once you have collected information or structured assessment about the child's use of language to express intentions, you can decide whether it is necessary to provide experiences that will help him learn to use his communication skills more effectively. For example, if the child is only able to attract attention or reject help by screaming or stamping his feet, then teach him to express himself by more conventional and appropriate means, such as calling out 'Look', 'Come here', 'Help me' or by shaking his head and saying 'No'. In the following section, suggestions are made for games and other activities that can be used to help a child use his language more effectively. As in earlier chapters, suggestions will be made for activities that can be carried out in planned games and in naturally-occurring daily situations.

Suggestions for training

Your primary objective here is to help the child acquire skills that he can use to influence and control his environment: for example, to secure attention and satisfy his needs. Your immediate goal is to help him learn to use conventional words and intonation patterns to convey his message, though initially he may need to learn to communicate by more primitive and less explicit non-verbal means, such as gestures or physical movements. Many of the activities that were described in earlier sections of the language program can be used here, provided they involve the child in taking an active role, as initiator or leader in the task.

For example:

1. Learning to indicate

Many children point and say 'there' to indicate to you that they have seen something of interest. Such behaviour often occurs when you are both looking at a book. Watch to see if your child uses a word or gesture to indicate. If he does not, model the behaviour and encourage him to show you things of interest. Watch for suitable situations and respond when he tries to direct your attention to something that interests him. During daily activities encourage him to show you what he has painted or built, when it is finished. Attend to what the child tells you and respond appropriately. Your aim is to help him to learn that it is worthwhile to try to direct the attention of an adult to something that interests him.

Remember that the child's earliest attempts to indicate will be expressed through an action (tugging your arm) or gesture (pointing). Once the child can convey his meaning using these means, you should teach him to use appropriate words, such as 'Look', 'See', 'There'. Use the C-I-C strategy (see Chapter 6). Later you can encourage the child to use two words to indicate, such as 'Mum, look', or 'Look there.'

2. Learning to obtain desired objects and services

Once the child is indicating with words, he should begin to use words to get things that he wants. Watch him to find out what strategies he is currently using to obtain objects he wants or help with tasks that he finds difficult to complete. Look for opportunities to model appropriate words and encourage the child to use them to ask for what he wants. For example, if he can say an appropriate word for something to eat or drink, you should ask 'What do you want?', If he does not yet know the right words to use, model an appropriate one. Say: 'ds you want apple or banana?', 'Do you want milk or orange juice?' This will give him an opportunity to imitate a correct word until he can say it spontaneously. Once the child can say appropriate words, you should prompt him to use them by saying 'you ask'.

The steps involved in learning to obtain or ask for things may be summarized as:

(a) learning to use word labels spontaneously (use the C-I-C strategy for teaching this)

(b) learning to answer a question that has two choices, and gives the child a model of the appropriate words,

Adult: 'Do you want apple or banana?'
Child: 'Banana'

(c) Learning to ask for something spontaneously or following a prompt such as 'you ask'. Initially the child will only use one word to ask for things. As the length of his utterances extends, so the length of his requests will extend, possibly in the following sequence:

'bickie'
'want bickie'
'me bickie'
'I want bickie' or 'me bickie please'
'Can I have a bickie, please?'

Note that initially, the child is not expected to use words like 'please' and 'thank you'. These words do not convey any useful information and are taught later, when the child is able to produce sentences longer than 3 or 4 words.

3. **Learning to regulate other people's actions**:

This involves three main skills; learning to protest, to reject and to request attention from another person.

(i) **to protest and reject**: Most children learn to say 'no' or 'don't' without any difficulty. However children who are having problems in learning to talk sometimes fail to begin to use these words and may not even learn to protest or reject by other means, such as by crying, or turning away to avoid something they do not want. Observe the child carefully and find out if he is expressing protest or rejection by using actions, sounds, or words. If he does not appear to be expressing these meanings in any form, you may need to devise situations in which, he can learn to protest and reject. If he is expressing protest and rejection through actions or sounds, but is not using any consistent gestures or words, you may need to teach him some. Look for suitable opportunities to model the expression of these meanings through gestures or words. If necessary, set up a game in which the child can learn to communicate in this way. For example, while playing on a tricycle, stop the trike, and hold it still. Encourage the child to push you away and say 'no'. Model the word for him when you interfere and stop his game. Once he says 'no' or pushes you away, let him continue with the game. If he is playing with a toy car or building with blocks, get in his way or pretend to take away some of the blocks. Model 'no' or 'don't' and encourage him to imitate you. Once you have observed him expressing protest, or rejection using words and actions spontaneously, then you will know that he has acquired this language function.

(ii) **to request attention**: usually children learn to attract attention to themselves at an early age. In a busy family this is an important skill for a child to acquire. Many children learn to call 'mummy' to get attention, and later will call out 'look at me' to ensure that Mother looks at them when they are jumping, climbing or doing something that should attract attention. Watch to see if your child is using actions or sounds to attract attention to himself. If he is only using actions, you could teach him to call out, using the name of the adult or words like 'look' or 'watch me'. Sometimes greeting words like 'Hi', or 'Hello' can be used in this way.

4. **Learning to initiate, maintain or terminate social interaction**

This is best learned at appropriate times during the day. For example, the child can learn to greet and farewell when arriving and leaving kindergarten or a friend's house. Maintaining social contact is achieved through use of devices such as naming the social partner, physical proximity and eye contact during conversation. You should look for naturally occurring opportunities to teach a child to use these behaviours appropriately.

5. **Learning to obtain information by asking questions**

Initially, the child learns to make requests for information, or help, by using a rising intonation with a single word. Only later will a simple sentence be used for this purpose. For example, the sequence of learning to ask questions usually follows the sequence:

'Daddy'
'Daddy go work?'

Much, much later, the child will use a wh-question form, complete the verb and invert it:

'Where Daddy go?'
or
'me can go?'

'Can I go?'

Another early question form is 'what?', with utterances such as 'what that' or 'what boy do?'. 'What', 'Who' and 'Where' forms are closely associated with the child's development of an interest in his environment. It is only later, when he has developed concepts about cause, manner and time, that he will use question forms like 'Why', 'How' and 'When?'

Games that involve turn-taking are a good way to teach children to ask and answer questions. The games need to be organized so that the child can take alternate roles, both to ask and answer questions. Initially the adult should take the questioner role, to model it for the child. Subsequently the adult and child can change roles, so that the child can ask questions of the adult. Once the rules of the game are learned, these games can be played with small groups of children, with the language-delayed child being given a turn to 'ask'. Lotto games are also a good means for teaching these skills. Here are some other ideas:

> **WHERE**? questions can be taught in a hiding game, with the child taking a turn to hide an object and ask 'where ________ gone?' after the teacher has modelled this behaviour several times. Or play a matching card game in a small group. The child can learn to ask 'where________?' rather than the more complicated question form 'who has________?' to obtain the pair of a card he holds.
>
> **WHAT?** questions can be trained using labelling (or naming) and action words which the child already uses. A series of objects or pictures could be used in a turn-taking game to ask 'what('s) that?' or 'what('s) (the) boy doing?' The teacher could first ask and then allow the child to play the teacher in an exchange of roles.

Similar games can be devised to help the child learn to use the other question forms: **why, who, how** and **when**.

Use of the remaining three communicative intentions listed earlier i.e.:

6. **to discover new words**,
7. **to give information**,
8. **to answer questions**

can be taught within activities similar to those that were described in earlier parts of this discussion.

Learning to use language in the ways outlined here is a very important part of learning to talk. A child may learn to comprehend and say words correctly in terms of their semantic meaning and can learn to combine words into sentences that are correct in terms of syntax and grammar. However, these skills are relatively useless if the child cannot **use** these words and sentences to influence events around him. This is the **pragmatic** aspect of language, and represents as important a facet of a language system as the other two aspects—**(semantic** and **syntactic)**—that were referred to in some detail in earlier chapters of this book.

B. MORPHOLOGY

Once the child is using all the rules for combining words in social conversation, he needs to extend the meaning he expresses in his language by using speech forms to denote **tense**, **mood** and **number**. For example, he needs to add morphemes to his action words to indicate present and past tense in action (i.e. walk-ing (present progressive), walk-ed (regular past) and walk-s (regular 3rd person present). Similarly, **location** needs to be defined by prepositions (in, on); or **plurality** and **possession** by adding a final ________-s to labelling words (e.g. dogs, dog's).

The child with delayed language tends to follow his non-delayed peer in extending meaning by adding morphemes to words, but does so at a much slower rate. Therefore, when working with such a child, it may be useful to know the sequential order of morphemes that has been found in normally developing children. These are listed in Appendix F. In the remaining section of this chapter, suggestions are made for assessing the child's use of morphemes by both unstructured observation or structured assessment activities and for providing experiences that will help him expand the number of morphemes that he uses in his speech.

Suggested assessment activities:

(a) Unstructured assessment

In order to find out which morphemes the child is using, you need a careful record of the child's actual words. If the morpheme is used in at least 90% of possible instances, then the child may be considered to have mastered its usage. Those morphemes which occur less frequently are regarded as emerging and may be trained before those which are not evident or could not be elicited. If training fails to elicit the targeted morpheme, check to see if the child comprehends the underlying concept. You may find that training is more successful if you precede each situation in which you expect the child to imitate your model of the morpheme, with a game in which the meaning of that morphene is demonstrated. We do not suggest that you train all 14 morphemes that are included in Appendix F, nor that this order should be strictly followed. Rather, select one which will best help the child to improve his communication by making his current messages clearer, or one which appears to be already emerging (i.e. that he uses occasionally). You can record the morphemes that the child is using, or those that appear to be emerging, in the summary assessment sheet for morphemes that is included in Appendix C. Information on the morphemes currently used by the child may be obtained from

i) language samples
ii) parent or teacher reports

Both these procedures involve making a record of the child's speech by tape recording the child during a play session (see Appendix A), or asking parents or other caretakers to record the child's utterances over a set time period (e.g. one day a week). A sample observational record that can be used for this purpose is included in Appendix D.

(b) Structured assessment

As opportunities to use all the morphemes do not always occur naturally, it is helpful to try to elicit them during a planned activity. You may find that the child is able to use certain of the morphemes, even though they were not evident in your observational records. In the following section, suggestions are made for activities that will provide the child with an opportunity to use some of the 14 morphemes listed in Appendix C. Since all the morphemes do not readily lend themselves to such elicitation, only those ones that can be expected to appear early in the child's development will be covered here. These include: —**ing**, **in**, **on**,—**s** and the **past irregular**, e.g. fell, sat.

1. **_______'ing'**

Will the child use_______ing (present progressive tense) with his verbs to convey continuous action?

Select 10 actions to demonstrate. Mime each action, then ask the child 'what am I doing?' If necessary prompt him with, 'I'm ea . . .'

Suggested actions: eating, drinking, clapping, brushing, driving, sleeping, reading, walking, hitting, drawing, painting.

Did the child use_______ing appropriately? YES/NO

If the child used_______ing in 90% of the responses, then he has acquired the use of this morpheme. If he did not use_______ing at the required level, you will need to give more practice in this skill.

If he didn't use_______ing at all, model the answer and encourage him to imitate you. Then demonstrate at least 3 of the actions again and ask 'What am I doing?'

Did he use_______ing after training? YES/NO

If **yes**, you can conclude that he is probably likely to benefit from training in the use of this morpheme. If **no**, then he may not yet be ready to extend his language in this way.

Suggestions for training present progressive_______'ing'

Collect simple action pictures. If the child's normal response when asked 'tell me what is happening', is to say 'boy jump', then train him to say 'boy jumping' using the C-I-C strategy. If he says 'kiss baby', then train the use of 'kissing baby', and so on. This could also be taught in action games, with the adult miming actions and then asking, 'What am I doing?'. Or use dolls or toy animals to demonstrate the actions in a game. Take turns with the child to model an action and then ask 'What's doll doing?' or 'Tell me what the bear is doing'.

2. **'in'**

Will the child use 'in' to define the location of an object?

Provide the child with five opportunities to answer 'where is the ball?' using 'in' + 'there' or 'in' + labelling word. You will need to collect a cup, box, shoe, bag, toy car or truck and a small ball. Let the child watch you hide the ball or car in each one of the five containers. Ask 'Where's the ball?' Try to avoid his substituting a pointing or other gestural response, by making sure his hands are on his lap, folded or held; or close your eyes and say 'Tell me where'.

Did the child use 'in' appropriately? YES/NO

If he used 'in' in four out of five of his responses, then he has acquired the use of this morpheme. If he did not use 'in' at the required level, you will need to devise some games to teach him this skill. If he did not use 'in', model the answer and encourage him to imitate you whilst you repeat the five tasks.

Did the child use 'in' after training? YES/NO

If **yes**, you can conclude that this skill is emerging and some practice in use of the morpheme can be given. If **no**, the child is probably not yet ready to learn to use this morpheme.

Suggestions for training 'in'

Collect an assortment of pictures showing items in containers. Present them to the child and label them (e.g. in the bottle, in bed, in his mouth, in the pram or nest). By using the C-I-C strategy, the child has the opportunity to learn the response, so that eventually he may answer a question like 'Where's the baby?' with 'in pram'.

During normal daily activities, ask the child where common household objects belong (e.g. **in** the bath or cupboard or bin). Once again, use the C-I-C strategy.

3. 'on'

Will the child use 'on' to define the location of an object?

Prepare five pairs of objects, which can be arranged so that one is supported on the other. For example, a doll or yourself with a hat on; a spoon balancing on a cup; a toy car on a box; a doll on a toy chair/table and a ball on a book.

Ask, 'Where's X?' Encourage the child to 'tell me where' if necessary. Each answer should be 'on' + X or 'on there'.

Did he use 'on' appropriately? YES/NO

If the child used 'on' in four out of five of his responses, he has acquired the use of this morpheme; if not, training games need to be planned to help him acquire the skill. In order to find out whether he will use 'on' after training, repeat the five tasks, but model the answer in each case, and encourage the child to imitate you.

Did he use 'on' after training? YES/NO

If **yes**, you can conclude that the child will benefit from training in the use of this morpheme. If **no**, he is probably not yet ready to expand his language in this way.

Suggestion for training 'on'

Tell the child that you're going to put an object (e.g. car) 'on' various things and you want him to say where it is. The child himself could be 'placed on' suitable things or you could demonstrate 'on table' 'on chair', 'on ball', using a doll or other object.

Remember to use the C-I-C strategy in these games. Once the child has learned the rules of the game, exchange roles. Let him try to trick you by putting an object 'on' something. Look for opportunities during the day to practise use of this word.

4. Plural -s

Will the child indicate number (plurality) by adding a final -s to his labelling words?

Collect a shoebox or drawstring bag and put several similar or identical objects in it. Hand the child the box or bag and say 'Look. What's in there?' His answer should be 'X-s'. Repeat this for five different objects.

Suggested items: spoons, cups, cars, balls, blocks

Did he add the final -s to his labelling words? YES/NO

If he used plural -s in 90% of the instances, then he has learned to use a plural -s in his speech. However, if he does not use plural -s at the required level, he will need more practice. If there is no evidence of plural -s, you should repeat the task, but model the appropriate answer and urge the child to imitate you.

Did he use plural -s after training? YES/NO

If **yes**, then he will probably benefit from more training.

Remember to provide a few opportunities for him to **understand** the concept of plurality before you introduce a model of the morpheme for him to imitate. This will help him learn to use it appropriately.

Suggestions for training regular plural -s

Assemble multiple copies of items, such as pencils, blocks, buttons and a box. The teacher and child could take turns to tell each other to 'put the buttons in the box' etc. Collect pairs of pictures, one of each pair showing a singular object, the other showing several of the same object. Give the child one of the pair and keep the other. Label 'car', 'cars' and once again use the C-I-C strategy.

5. **Past Irregular**
Will the child demonstrate use of the past tense of irregular action verbs such as broke, fell, ran, sat, blew?

Demonstrate a series of actions such as those listed below, using dolls, cars, animals or any toy that moves or changes. Afterwards ask, 'What happened?' or 'What did I do?' or 'What did dolly do?'. The child should reply using the past irregular tense, if he's able to mark with words the time aspect of the event.

Suggested action sequences

Fell : a doll walks and then falls down
Ran : a doll runs
Sat : show doll sitting on a chair, then remove
Blew : blow out a match or candle or blow a light object
Broke : show a sharp pencil point, then break it or break a twig in half.

Did he comment on the events using the past tense of an irregular verb?
YES/NO

If he used the past irregular in 90% of his responses, then he is able to represent past tense in this manner. If not, practice sessions should be tried. Repeat your demonstrations, but model the correct answers and encourage the child to imitate them.

Did he use the past irregular after training? YES/NO

If **yes**, then he will probably profit from training in this form. If **no**, then he is probably not yet ready to learn to express the past irregular verb form in his speech.

Suggestions for training the past irregular

Play a series of games with objects that provide opportunities for use of past irregular verb forms. Model the form and encourage the child to imitate. Use a series of picture cards that demonstrate these action sequences, e.g. Jack and Jill, Humpty Dumpty. Ask 'What happened?', then 'What happened next?'.

6. **Possessive________'s**

Will the child indicate possession by using the apostrophe 's with his labelling words.

Select items that are known to belong to five members of the family or playmates (e.g. bags, shoes, hats, toys). Ask 'Whose is this?' or 'Whom does this belong to?'.

Did he indicate possession with '________+'s'? YES/NO

If the child used possessive________'s in 90% of instances, he has this skill. If it is used inconsistently he will need more practice. If there is no evidence of 's, repeat the tasks, but model the answer each time and encourage the child to imitate. For example, point to the child's pants/dress/chair and ask 'Whose is this?' and answer '________'s pants/dress/chair' (e.g. Tom's).

Did he use a possessive after training? YES/NO

If **yes**, you should give more training. If **no**, he is probably not yet ready to learn to use this speech form.

Suggestions for training the possessive———'s

Have paper dolls or pictures of a boy and girl and let the child sort out pictures of clothes which belong to each. As he sorts, use the C-I-C strategy to elicit the correct response. You label each item as 'boy's X' or 'girl's X' and allow him a turn to sort or dress the doll if he labels appropriately, using the possessive marker.

Or select a colourful picture of a dog (or other animal) and as you point to the body parts, label 'dog's tail' etc., and encourage the child to imitate. Once again the C-I-C strategy can be used.

The remaining morphemes (numbers 7 to 14, Appendix F), which have not been discussed in detail here, are usually acquired later, when the child has more advanced language skills. However, they may also be trained, through games that involve objects and pictures, or at appropriate times during normal daily activities.

Children who are slow in acquiring the early morphemes sometimes do not attend to speech closely enough to perceive small sounds like '-s', '-ing' or '-ed' when they are embedded in a longer utterance. As part of a teaching program, it may be helpful to include some activities that will help the child learn to **listen more carefully** to the speech that he hears. Games like 'Simon says' can help a child learn to listen. Similarly, any activity that includes an action that is contingent on hearing a morpheme can be used. For example, give the child a page of uncoloured balloons. Let him colour in a balloon when he hears a morpheme that you are currently teaching.

e.g. Dog running (colour a balloon)
Dog run (do not colour a balloon)

Activities like these will help the child attend to the morphemes that are embedded in speech.

It is important to remember that the morphemes are often acquired very slowly, because children probably need to develop an understanding of the underlying concepts before they can be expected to use appropriate morphemes correctly. When providing activities to train the use of particular morphemes, it is a good idea to begin the session with some games that demonstrate the meaning of the morpheme that you want to teach. In normal language development, the pattern of acquisition occurs in the following sequence, as the child's minimum length of utterance (MLU) has reached the appropriate level.

MLU	**Morphemes acquired**
2.0 to 2.5	-ing; in; on
2.5 to 3.0	past irregular; possevie——'s; uncontracted copula
3.0 to 3.7	articles; regular past; 3rd person regular
3.7 to 4.5	3rd person irregular, uncontracted auxiliary; contracted copula; contracted progressive auxiliary.

Once children have acquired these morphemes, they are able to convey more complex meanings such as number and tense. They will continue to refine these messages, with the addition of other forms and constructions from the adult grammatical system, until they have acquired the range of skills that are present in the speech of mature language users.

Conclusion

By the time the child is ready to include these morphemes in his sentences it may be claimed that he has mastered many of the skills that contribute to becoming a competent member of his language community. Once this stage is reached, your task should be to ensure that he is given opportunities to use his language skills appropriately, and in doing so, to learn that talking is worthwhile, both as a social tool and as a means of making things happen.

CHAPTER 9

WORKING IN A GROUP SITUATION

Most of the teaching situations that have been described so far have involved an adult working or playing with a single child. Although this has proved to be a very effective way of teaching language skills, it is not the only way. Language skills can be taught very effectively in a group situation. Sometimes this may be the only opportunity that you have for teaching, particularly if you have a group of children in a class and are unable to work with each one individually. In some cases you may carry out all your teaching within the group because you prefer working with children in a group, or because no other options are possible; or you may choose to use a group situation, to extend the work you have been doing on an individual basis and to give the child a chance to practise newly learned skills in a variety of settings. Some advantages of working in a group situation are:

1. It provides opportunities to ensure **generalization of your current language objectives to new situations.**
2. The language-learning child will benefit from the **appropriate language models provided by other children** in the group, and
3. Group activities provide the child with **opportunities to use his newly acquired language skills.**

The most important point to remember when you are working in a group situation is that you must have a very clear idea of the language level of each **individual** child so that you can plan your **group** activities to ensure that each child can participate in a manner appropriate to his current level of functioning.

In this chapter we will consider two types of group situations that can be used for teaching language:

1. **Naturally-occurring situations** that arise during the day.
2. **Structured group games** that can be planned to provide opportunities for language learning.

1. Naturally occurring situations

Many opportunities for teaching language occur naturally during the day. Try to use these situations to supplement more structured language games. Sometimes these are the only times when you can get the child to comply with your objectives for language, so these situations can be very important in a language program. Look for language objectives that can be taught during routine activities like meal-times, dressing, toileting and washing, or during games that recur often during unstructured play periods.

For example, structure morning juice time so that all the children in a group have to ask for their drink, or for a piece of fruit; vary your expectations for each child according to his language level. For example, initially you may expect some of the children only to look at your face before they are given something, but gradually this expectation can be changed so that eventually they ask 'Can I have a drink, please?' or 'May I have an apple?'

Here is a list of the objectives that you could use for children asking for their juice and fruit. It gives you some idea of the stages in learning to ask.

Sequence of Objectives

(1) ASKING FOR A DRINK
 'j' **or** 'd'
 'Juice' or 'drink'
 'I drink'
 'I juice' **or** 'I have juice'
 'Can I have juice?'
 'Can I have orange juice?'
 'May I have orange juice, please?'

(2) ASKING FOR FRUIT
 'e'
 'eat'
 'I eat'
 'I eat apple' **or** 'I eat fruit'
 'Can I have orange?'
 'May I have an orange, please?'

With lots of practice, the children will gradually improve from saying simply 'juice' or 'want juice', to asking properly using a complete sentence. They can use these skills many times during the day, at home as well as at school. So this is a good way for children to begin to learn to ask for things.

The strategy described for learning to ask can be useful in many other group situations. For example, if children are learning to match objects to pictures, each child can be expected to say something at an appropriate level as he does the task. A child who is not yet talking might be able to make a sound to match the object he is matching (like 'brm') while a more competent child might label the object ('car') or make a simple sentence about it ('daddy car' or 'my daddy has a car'). In a group activity like building outside with blocks, one child might be encouraged to say 'er-er' as he moved a heavy block into place, while another could be encouraged to label the object being built ('boat') or to talk about it ('my boat', or 'boat go on water'). When familiar stories like the Three Bears or Three Billy Goats Gruff are acted out by the children, some might only say 'big bed' while others could say whole sentences like 'Who's been sleeping in my bed?' These familiar 'scripts' provide a very effective opportunity for using words.

2. Structured group games

Children often learn useful speech from listening to other children modelling appropriate words and you can take advantage of this in many situations. For example, a Lotto game can provide good opportunities for talking, with the less competent children learning to imitate their more competent friends in the game. Two children can take charge of the cards and ask the question 'who has . . .?'. A more able child can model such language for a less able child whose speech is difficult to understand. The other children in the game have to say 'I do', or perhaps label their cards, when it is their turn.

Board and card games like lotto are a good activity for language learning because they provide many opportunities for each child to both **hear** and **say** useful words and sentences. Each child has to say 'I do' several times to fill his card, and may also have opportunities to label the pictures on the cards or ask 'who has this?' Some advantages of a game like this are:

1. It is **enjoyable** and **talking** in it is **worthwhile** because when the children talk, something happens in the game.
2. It provides opportunities to hear repeated **models of useful words and sentences**, and
3. It provides **repeated opportunities to say simple words and sentences**.

Much of the language that children use is learned in routine situations like the Lotto game. For example, many children, even those who cannot talk, know what to do when they greet people, when it is a birthday party, or when they are going to bed. So look for activities in which there are opportunities for the child to use speech in a routine situation and make sure that the child joins in. Many of these opportunities arise when adults and children are in a group together during daily activities, so try to include these when planning your language teaching.

Language learning can take place in many settings. You do not have to restrict your teaching to the times when you are working with a child on an individual basis. Your objectives can be taught equally well, and sometimes more effectively, in group situations.

Conclusion

When planning a language program for a child, remember that teaching can take place in three types of situations,

1. **Structured or semi-structured one-to-one activities**
2. **Naturally occurring situations**
3. **Structured group games**

Certainly the most effective learning will take place when opportunities for talking occur in many different situations during the day. So make sure that you take advantage of all possible occasions for practising new language skills.

CHAPTER 10

SIGNING AS A SUPPLEMENT TO SPEECH

Before children begin to use words to communicate they often convey their meaning in other ways. For example, an infant will lift up his arms to tell you that he wants to be picked up, or to get you to look as something interesting in the sky, such as a bird or a plane. Sometimes a child may use a gesture to convey meaning, for example by putting a finger to his lips to show that the doll is asleep, or taking your hand to let you know that he wants to play a finger game like 'Round and round the garden'.

Sometimes the child uses *objects* to tell you what he wants: he may fetch a cup when he wants a drink, or your bag when it is time to go home. Often the child includes a sound in such communicative acts (a performative or protoword) and will continue to use it until he can produce recognizable words that express his meaning more precisely.

In earlier chapters, procedures were described to help children move from the preverbal stage, in which they communicate through actions, gestures and other signals, to the verbal stage when they are able to produce recognizable words. However some children find it very difficult to say words clearly. They want to talk. They understand that they can use their voices to communicate, but for some reason they find it very difficult to produce words that can be understood by a listener, particularly when they want to talk about an object or event that is not present—something that happened yesterday, or that they want to do tomorrow.

There is some evidence that children who are having particular difficulty in learning to say words that are intelligible may benefit from learning to use a sign as a supplement to their sounds, to help a listener understand what they are trying to say. This chapter is concerned with issues related to helping children learn to use signs to supplement their speech when it is very difficult for a listener to understand them. Some suggestions are made for deciding which child may benefit from learning to use signs, and procedures are described for teaching signs to a language-delayed child.

1. WHY TEACH SIGNS TO A LANGUAGE-DELAYED CHILD?

There are a number of reasons why teaching a child to sign may help him begin to communicate and possibly to speak more intelligibly. These include:

a) A visual cue, like a **sign**, can help a child remember the sound of a word. Some children remember things that they see more easily than things that they hear, so pairing a word with a consistent visual sign may help them recall the word. For example, you often use a gesture to help a very young child understand what you mean. Words like 'no', 'stop' and 'no more' often have a gesture associated with them and the child learns to understand the meaning of the words by attending to the gesture as much as to the sound of the word.

b) Signs can be particularly useful for helping children learn the words for things that have no concrete referent—words like 'look', 'come' or 'give'.

c) Not only does **the sign** help the child learn words, it also **helps the adult to comprehend what he is trying to say**, when his speech is difficult to understand. This is important, because if the child can make himself understood, he will be less frustrated and more willing to try to talk next time. There is the added advantage that if he can engage another person in conversation, he is able to get more practice in talking. Moreover, if the conversational partner can understand what the child is trying to say, he can respond with a clear model of an appropriate word.

2. WHO SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR A SIGNING PROGRAM?

There are four factors that should be taken into account when considering the use of signs in a language program for a speech-delayed child.

a) **earlier failure with more conventional methods of remediation**
b) **the developmental level of the child**
c) **the child's ability to produce signs**
d) **environmental factors**

a) **Earlier failure with more conventional methods of remediation:** Clearly you will not need to consider using signs as a supplement to speech unless the child has demonstrated marked difficulties in producing comprehensible utterances in spite of previous exposure to a more conventional remedial program.

b) **The child's developmental level:** Can he understand the relationship between objects and the symbols that represent them? If the child is able to take part in imaginary games, such as dressing up and pretending to go shopping, building a boat out of blocks, or taking part in a tea party, then he is probably able to understand the meaning of symbols.

Where there is significant discrepancy between a child's expressive and receptive language then it is possible that the child will benefit from a signing program. For example, if the child comprehends the meaning of words like 'on', 'under', 'beside', and knows the meaning of colour names like red, blue, yellow, but cannot produce intelligible words, then he is likely to profit from learning to use signs. Similarly, the child may know what to do when he needs help with a puzzle, but he may have difficulty in communicating more complex meaning because he cannot say the appropriate words intelligibly. Such a child wants to communicate and has topics to talk about, but lacks the ability to say words sufficiently clearly to be understood. Developmentally, he is ready to talk and may therefore be able to learn to use signs.

c) **The child's ability to produce signs**. Two issues can be considered here. First, is the child **interested** in using signs? Probably a child who is using a variety of gestures or sounds and clearly wants to communicate, could be interested in learning to use signs as well as sounds to get his message across to a listener, whereas a child who is still using only simple gestures like pointing to communicate, may not yet be interested in learning to sign. Secondly, you need to find out if the child can shape his hands to make the signs. This involves the ability to attend to the hand movements of another person, and more importantly, the ability to control the movements that he makes with sufficient precision so that he can shape his hands to make a recognizable sign. One way of checking whether a child is able to make the fine movements that are required for signing is to check the child's ability to imitate fine hand movements. A useful test for this is described in Kiernan, Jordan and Saunders, (1978).

d) **Factors in the environment.** Two important environmental factors need to be considered when deciding to teach signs to a language-delayed child. First, the teacher must be very familiar with the signing system that is going to be used. Second, it is very important that the family, particularly the mother or primary caregiver, becomes familiar with the signs that the child is learning. The child will acquire the signs more rapidly if he is able to use them in a variety of situations and he can be helped to do this if parents, siblings, and other children who play with him, also learn to understand and use the signs.

Once you have decided that the child who is not speaking clearly has the prerequisite skills for learning to use signs as a supplement to speech, you will need to select an appropriate signing program, identify a set of words to teach the child to sign, and choose a variety of teaching situations in which to introduce him to this new communication skill.

3. SELECTING A SIGNING PROGRAM.

Since the child needs to be able to communicate with as many people as possible, you should select a program that is widely used in the situations in which he is likely to be placed. Of the many signing programs currently available, it is important that the one you select is used in the preschool, school or other setting or situation in which the child is likely to become involved. Two references that may be useful for Australian children are:

Dictionary of Australian Signs. R.G. Jeanes and B. Reynolds (Eds.)

Victorian School for Deaf Children, Melbourne (1982).

Sign it and Say it. A Cooney and G. Knox, Stockton Hospital, N.S.W. (1980).

4. TEACHING A LANGUAGE-DELAYED CHILD TO USE SIGNS TO COMMUNICATE.

Before you can begin to teach a child to use signs, you will need to select:

appropriate signs to teach

activities for teaching the use of signs

a) **Selecting signing objectives**

Initially you should select signs for words that the child will want to use. These could include:

(i) **Signs for objects that have interest for the child**

As was suggested in Chapter 4, things that are colourful, move and make a sound are likely to have a high level of interest for children learning to talk. Try to select signs that are highly iconic, since these will be easier to learn initially. Signs that involve both hands in the same action are also easy to learn.

(ii) **Signs for useful words that do not have a concrete reference**

For example, words like 'open', 'look' and 'gone' may be useful for the child. Later you can help him combine his signs into simple sentences, by pairing signs for words like 'look' and 'gone' with signs for 'car', 'train' and so on.

b) **Activities for teaching signs**

Initially you will need to teach the child to associate a sign with both the object or event that it represents and an appropriate word. You may use real objects or pictures to teach the signs. Any of the games described in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 could be useful.

Once the child shows that he has learned a sign, opportunities should be created for him to use it. For example, during daily activities he can be asked questions that gave him an opportunity to reply with a sign. When asked 'Do you want to play with the blocks or ride a bike?' he may reply by using a sign as well as a word. A lotto game can be set up and the child encouraged to ask for a particular card, using a sign with the word. It is a good idea to prepare a book showing a child's signs and the objects they represent to send home so that his family can understand and use the signs. As new words are learned they can be added to the book, so that everyone knows the signs the child is using.

Not all children with language problems are able to learn to use signs to supplement their speech. For some children other systems may be more appropriate, such as a symbol system. The major issues to be considered when deciding whether to use a signing program as a supplement to speech are as follows:

1. **Failure of more conventional methods**
Has the child been exposed to more conventional remedial programs without any marked improvement in the production of comprehensible speech?

2. **Developmental factors**
Is the child cognitively able to use symbols?
Is there a marked discrepancy between receptive and expressive language skills which suggests that the child could benefit from being taught signs as a supplement to his speech?

3. **Production factors**
Does the child have the prerequisite skills of manual dexterity?
    - ability to imitate motor movements
    - memory for hand movements

   Is the child interested in using signs?

4. **Environmental factors**
Is the teacher familiar with an appropriate signing program?
Is the child's family interested in participating in a signing program?

If, after screening the child, you find that he satisfies these criteria, then you should go ahead and try signing as a supplement to the child's language program.

Conclusion

The primary objective of any intervention program for a non-verbal child is to facilitate the acquisition of comprehensible speech. However, if, after some time in a language-development program, it becomes evident that the child is having particular difficulties in producing intelligible speech, then one option for helping him acquire more effective communication skills may be to teach him to use signs as a supplement to his speech. Current evidence suggests that signs may facilitate and will certainly not interfere with the child's acquisition of language, and in particular, of intelligible speech. For some children, using signs may be a very effective means for learning that communication is worthwhile and that it is **fun** to learn to talk.

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSION

This book was written as a manual for parents, teachers and others who want to help children who are experiencing difficulties in acquiring language, begin to talk. It was based on knowledge acquired from both practical experiences with language-delayed children within a special education setting, and current theory and research on the processes that underlie language development.

While designed primarily as a practical guide for facilitating early language development, the book also contains a brief introduction to current theoretical explanations of language acquisition and a discussion of the procedures involved in setting up a language intervention program within a home, preschool or school. It is not intended to replace clinical programs provided by speech pathologists—rather to provide guidelines for parents or teachers who are worried and wish to provide some extra help for a child experiencing problems in learning to talk. No suggestions are made regarding articulation training or remediation of disordered syntactic development. Suggestions are limited to ways of stimulating very early language skills in children who are having difficulties in acquiring speech. The book therefore attempts to provide some information on general aspects of language development and intervention, but is primarily concerned with outlining specific strategies that can be used to both assess a child's current communication skills and identify opportunities for facilitating the acquisition of more highly developed language skills by the delayed child.

The approach to language development that underlies the procedures described in this book has been termed **transactional**. According to this view, language is acquired by a child as a result of recurring interactive experiences with familiar adults, usually the mother or other consistent care-giver. During such exchanges, the adult provides clear models of appropriate language that the child will in time learn to produce himself, as part of the sequence of events involved in the activity or game. Here the child learns to respond to the actions and sounds of his partner in the game, and also to take the other's role and become the initiator of the routine; e.g. to alternate as suprised and surprisor in a game of peek-a-boo.

If the transactional view of language acquisition is accepted, then failure to acquire early language skills can be explained in part as a failure to acquire transactional skills. This can result from factors associated with the interactional situation, or with factors inherent in the child. Factors associated with the **situation** may include:

1. Limited opportunity to participate in transactional exchanges with adults. The child's consistent adult care-taker may be too busy or too preoccupied with other problems or responsibilities to provide him with sufficient opportunities for interaction. Such opportunities occur most naturally during feeding, bathing and dressing routines.

2. Lack of consistent adult partners. If the care-taking figure changes too often, the child may not have time to build up a set of interactive routines that are shared with a familiar adult.
3. Lack of recurring interactive experiences with adults. The child's daily routines may change too often, as when a child is frequently moved from one location to another, so that there is little continuity in his daily experiences.
4. Provision of a poor language model. This can include adult speech that is too complex, too fast or where there is more than one language spoken. Many children do learn to speak in spite of such difficulties in the language they hear. However, if there is any other factor present inhibiting the acquisition of speech, there may be a compounding effect that will interfere with language development.

Factors associated with the **child** can include:

1. Lack of prerequisite skills that enable the child to participate in relevant activities. This can involve:
   a) poor attending skills or very short attention span.
   b) inappropriate attending skills: the child may attend to irrelevant or trivial aspects of social situations, such as the colour of the adult's clothing, rather than his actions and sounds.
   c) inability to initiate: the child may not be aware that he can cause events to occur. He may not realise that he has the capacity to act independently, such as taking the surprisor role in peek-a-boo, rather than the more passive role of the surprised.

2. Disabilities that may interfere with the child's effective participation in social interaction. These can include mild to severe, or fluctuating sensory impairments (primarily visual and auditory), restriction of movement from a physical handicap, or any known mentally handicapping condition.

The occurrence of any of the factors listed here, either singularly or in combination, may interfere with the child's participation in effective interactive experiences that underlie the acquisition of language. Where such factors are likely to occur, compensatory measures may need to be taken to ensure that the child does acquire the skills he will need to learn to talk. It was with this end in view that this book was prepared.

Overall, then, two critical assumptions underlie the procedures that have been outlined here.

1. The child himself must play an active role in learning to talk. Environmental conditions can be manipulated to facilitate this process, but essentially, he must begin to take some initiatives. Therefore a basic prerequisite is that the child must learn that talking is worthwhile.
2. A child learns to talk through taking part in recurring transactions with consistent adults. If a child is having difficulty in acquiring speech, or if he is known to be at risk for learning to talk, opportunities **can** be provided that will help him acquire this skill. Appropriate procedures are outlined in this book. These broadly follow the learning pattern that occurs in the development of children who develop language skills naturally, though some variations are suggested, according to current knowl-

> edge about the strategies that appear to be effective in developing speech in language-delayed or 'at risk' groups of children. The main point for emphasis here, is that children **can be helped to learn to talk, by provision of appropriate experiences.**

Learning to talk is one of the most difficult tasks that a child encounters in his early development. Yet it is probably the most critical skill in the process of learning to be human. Most children acquire adequate speech skills before they go to school. However it is important that all possible efforts are made to help every child to become a functioning member of his language community as early as possible, since, until the child can communicate effectively with a variety of people, he will be highly frustrated and, in effect, barred from full participation in his social group. Every child needs to learn to talk, and it is incumbent upon anyone who is responsible for the care of a child to ensure that he acquires this skill at an appropriate age, in spite of any condition, environmental or personal, that may impede this process. It is hoped that this book will provide some useful guidelines for those who wish to try to help a language-delayed child acquire useful speech.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TAKING A LANGUAGE SAMPLE

1. Set up a situation where you can play with your child, using toys or books which you know he enjoys.

2. Tape record your play for 5-10 minutes.

3. Transcribe your language sample, using the following guidelines:

    a) listen to your tape and write down every utterance made by both you and the child. An utterance need not be a complete sentence. If there is a longish pause then write the next words said as a new utterance.

    b) use a new line for each utterance.

    c) write the child's utterances in a different colour.

    d) be sure to write down exactly what was said—and not what you expected to hear. Sometimes your child's speech may not be clear. Write what he said and put the correct form of the word afterwards in brackets. If the child makes sounds only, try to record these.

    eg.
    T. that's a car
    C. car
    T. push car
    C. br'm br'm

4. **Analyse** your language sample to gain information about your own language and that of the child.

    a) Ratio of adult : child utterances.

    Count the number of utterances spoken by you and the number spoken by the child. If your ratio is more than 2:1 you are probably speaking too much and not giving the child enough opportunity to talk.

eg.	Total child utterances:	51	
	Total adult utterances:	107	(acceptable)
	Total adult utterances:	150	(too many)

    b) Calculate your MLU (mean length of utterance) and the MLU of the child.

    To do this count the number of words spoken and divide this by the number of utterances spoken. Do this separately for both adult and child. If your MLU is more than a couple of words longer than that of the child, take care to keep your uterances short and simple.

eg.	child MLU	1.3	
	adult MLU	3.1	(acceptable)
	adult MLU	5.6	(too long)

APPENDIX B

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection involves the use by a parent or teacher of simple procedures to record the day-to-day progress of the child on his set objectives. It is only by recording the child's progress on a daily basis that you can tell accurately if the child is learning. Progress may be slow but having a record to show that change is taking place helps to prevent parents and teachers from becoming discouraged.

To collect data and monitor a child's progress you will need data collection sheets suited to the task the child is learning. The following two sheets are examples. (Similar sheets are included in Ready, Set, Go: Talk to Me: Horstmeier & MacDonald, Merrill, 1978).

1. The sheets contain spaces for the following information:
    - child's name
    - training level
    - specific task
    - materials needed
    - specific instructions
    - next step in program

2. Each sheet has space for 10 target items and a record of how the child performed over 5 days; thus one sheet can be used per week, with five sessions of language training a week.

3. The sheets come in two formats to cover the range of language tasks encompassed in a language program.

    Format 1 — yes/no

    This will be used when it is necessary only to ascertain whether the child can or can't perform the required task.

    eg. looks at objects turn taking functional play motor imitation with sound

    Format 2 — C_1-I-C_2

    This will be used when the task involves expressive language on the part of the child.

eg.	*Training Level*	*Specific Task*
	single word	to label
	two words	to produce action words

The list of training targets will be made up of some easy items to give the child confidence, and a number of new items. A decision about when to change the items will be made on the basis of how quickly the child learns and whether he is using items learned in his everyday environment. As a general rule an item will be dropped when a child has completed it successfully for at least 3 days in a row. An item may also be dropped because it is deemed inappropriate if a child has made no progress after 2 weeks.

The data sheets provide a useful record of the child's progress throughout the program.

DAILY DATA SHEET : FORMAT 1

Name ______________________ Training Level ______________

Materials Needed ______________________ Task ______________

Instructions	Date:			Date:			Date:			Date:			Date:		
	Success		Incorrect/ Alternate Response	Success		Incorrect/ Alternate Response	Success		Incorrect/ Alternate Response	Success		Incorrect/ Alternate Response	Success		Incorrect/ Alternate Response
	Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No	
Total			Total			Total			Total			Total			

Next Step: ______________________

DAILY DATA SHEET : FORMAT 1

Name John Training Level Appropriate Play

Materials Needed teddy, cup, box, cloth Task to play with teddy and objects

Instructions	Date: 16 · 4			Date: 17 · 4			Date: 18 · 4			Date: 20 · 4			Date: 21 · 4		
model + label actions	Success		Incorrect/ Alternate Response	Success		Incorrect/ Alternate Response	Success		Incorrect/ Alternate Response	Success		Incorrect/ Alternate Response	Success		Incorrect/ Alternate Response
	Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No	
pat teddy	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
teddy walk		✓			✓		✓			✓			✓		
" gone		✓	doesn't understand?	✓				✓			✓			✓	
" sleep		✓		✓		said "sh-sh"	✓			✓			✓		
" eat	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
" drink	✓				✓		✓			✓			✓		
" wash	✓			✓			✓			✓			✓		
more drink		✓			✓			✓			✓			✓	
drink gone		✓			✓			✓			✓			✓	
Bye teddy	✓			✓			✓		"bye"	✓				✓	
Total	5		Total	6		Total	7		Total	7		Total	6		

Next Step: Add performative sounds to success items.

DAILY DATA SHEET : FORMAT 2

Name ______________________ Training Level ______________________

Materials ______________________ Task ______________________

Instructions	Date:				Date:				Date:				Date:				Date:			
	C_1	1	C_2	Comments	C_1	1	C_2	Comments	C_1	1	C_2	Comments	C_1	1	C_2	Comments	C_1	1	C_2	Comments
Total				Total				Total				Total				Total				

C_1 Child responds to questions appropriately

1 Child imitates

C_2 Child answers questions appropriately (after a correct imitation)

Next Step: ______________________

DAILY DATA SHEET : FORMAT 2

Name David

Training Level Single word production

Materials ball, spoon, cup, shoe, hat, book, key, car, doll, bag or pillowcase.

Task to label objects hidden in bag.

Instructions	Date:				Date:				Date:				Date:				Date:			
objects in bag, child feel, label	C_1	1	C_2	Comments	C_1	1	C_2	Comments	C_1	1	C_2	Comments	C_1	1	C_2	Comments	C_1	1	C_2	Comments
ball	✓				✓				✓				✓				✓			
spoon		✓				✓	✓		✓			"pom"								
cup		✓	✓	"dup"		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓		✓			
shoe		✓								✓				✓				✓	✓	
hat		✓								✓				✓				✓	✓	
book		✓				✓	✓			✓	✓		✓				✓			
key		✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓		✓				✓			
car	✓				✓				✓				✓				✓			
baby		✓				✓	✓		✓			"bubba"	✓				✓			
Total	2		2	Total	2		5	Total	5		2	Total	5		1	Total	6		2	

CC 91

C_1 Child responds to questions appropriately

1 Child imitates

C_2 Child answers questions appropriately (after a correct imitation)

Next Step: Substitute new words for success items.

APPENDIX C

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT SHEETS
LEVEL 1 PREREQUISITE FOR TALKING

(a) Looking together

Child's Name ____________________

Date ____________________

Criterion : child is unvolved in joint attention with adult for at least 5 seconds.

Procedure : engage activity that should attract the child's attention - encourage the child to look.

Materials : pop-up toy; toy car in bag; picture book OR pull along toy; bell in box; glove puppet; simple pictures.

Scoring child's response : Yes = 1 No = 0

Looking together tasks	Child's Response	Comment	Alternative tasks
(a) pop-up toy			pull-along toy
(b) toy in bag			bell in box
(c) finger play			puppet talks to child
(d) picture book			simple pictures

Pass = 3 out of 4 items

If only 1 or 2 out of 4 items are passed, then give more practice.

If no items are passed then you should train eye contact and tracking (following a moving object).

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT SHEETS

LEVEL 1 : PREREQUISITE FOR TALKING

(b) Imitation and Turn-taking

Child's Name ______________________________

Date ______________________________

Criterion : Child imitates or takes his turn in an activity with an adult.

Procedure : Adult introduces game and invites child to participate, saying "do this" or "your turn, my turn".

Materials : Cloth; can; 5 blocks OR toy and cloth; bean bag; peg board.

Scoring child's response : Yes = 1 No = 0 (note: accept sound/word approximations)

Imitation tasks	Child's Response	Did child need training to pass item?	Alternative tasks.
(a) hide face, uncover			hide toy under cloth, look for it
(b) i clap hands			hit drum
ii hit table			tap head
iii rub tummy			shake hands
iv drop toy			knock over block tower
(must imitate 2 actions to pass)			
Turn-taking tasks			
(c) push car			throw bean bag
(d) build block tower			take pegs off board

Pass = 3 out of 4 items

If 2 or more items are passed, then give more practice.

If only 1 item is passed, you should give more practice in Looking Together activities.

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT SHEET

LEVEL 1: PREREQUISITES FOR TALKING

(c) Appropriate Play

Child's Name ______________________________

Date ______________________________

Criterion	:	Child plays appropriately with objects - either functionally or imaginatively.
Procedure	:	Present items to child - if necessary, say "Look, you play" or "what can you do with this/these?"
Materials	:	Car, hairbrush; teapot and cup; book OR animal; cup; bowl and spoon; paper and crayon.
Scoring child's response	:	Yes = 1 No = 0

Appropriate play tasks	Child's Response	Did child need training to pass?	Alternative tasks
(a) toy car			toy animal
(b) hairbrush			cup
(c) teapot and cup			bowl and spoon
(d) book			paper and crayon

Pass = 3 out of 4 items

If 1 or 2 out of 4 items are passed with or without training, then give more practice.

If no items passed then give more practice in Looking Together and/or Turn-taking and Imitation Skills.

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT SHEET

LEVEL 2: PERFORMATIVES

Child's Name ______________________________

Date ______________________________

Criterion : Child produces performative sounds during play.

Procedure : Introduce a game, make an appropriate sound during the game and encourage the child to imitate you.

Materials : Model cars or aeroplanes; model animals OR doll and teaset; musical instruments.

Scoring child's response : Yes = 1 No = 0

Performative tasks	Child's Response	Did child need a prompt to pass?	Alternative tasks
(a) peek-a-boo			ring-a-rosie
(b) model cars,aeroplanes			teaset and doll
(c) model animals			musical instruments

Pass = 2 out of 3 items

If the child could respond appropriately in at least 2 play activities, then go on to the next Level in the program (Level 3).

If only 1 item was passed, then give more practice. If no items are passed, go back to Imitation and Turn-taking skills in the previous Level in the Program (Level 1).

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT SHEET

LEVEL 3: FIRST WORDS

(a) Single Word Production

Child's Name ______________________________

Date ______________________________

Criterion : Child produces single words during play.

Procedure : Introduce a game, model appropriate words and encourage the child to talk.

Materials : Large cloth or paper bag; small familiar toys as listed; pictures or single picture book.

Scoring child's response : Yes = 1 No = 0

Single word tasks	Child's response	Did child need a prompt to pass?	Alternative tasks
1. Spontaneous speech			
(a) i. ball			shoe
ii. car			doll
iii. cup			hat
iv. spoon			key
(the child must label 3 to pass this item)			
2. Imitated speech			
(b) i. bell			train or pom pom
ii. bird			comb or mop
iii. bath			cow or mat
iv. truck			pig or owl
(the child must label 3 to pass this item)			

If the child passed 3 on both items then go to the next chapter on early sentences, (Level 4).

If only 1 item was passed, then give more practice.

If no items were passed, go back to the previous level in the Program (level 2).

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT SHEET

LEVEL 3 : FIRST WORDS

(b) First Words List

Speech Mode : Spontaneous (S)
Imitation (I)

Child's Name ______________________

Date ______________________

PEOPLE	MODE	OBJECT	MODE	LOCATION WORDS	MODE	ACTION	MODE	MODIFIERS	MODE	SOCIALLY USEFUL	MODE

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT RECORD FORM - LEVELS 1,2 AND 3

Name ______________________ D.O.B. ______________ Test Date: __________

Scoring: Yes = 1 No = 0 Tester: __________

Level 1 (a) Joint attention for at least 5 seconds.

Procedure: engage in activity that should attract the child's attention - encourage child to look.

	Child's Response	Comment	
Pop-up toy			or pull-along
Toy in bag			or bell in box
Finger play			or puppet talks to child
Picture book			or simple pictures
Total			

Pass: 3/4 correct: (if less than 3, give more practice).

Level 1(b) Imitation and Turn-taking in joint activity.

Procedure: introduce game and invite child to participate, saying "your turn, my turn" or "you do it".

Imitation	Child's Response	Did child need training to pass?	
(a) Hide face, uncover			or hide toy under cloth
(b) i Clap hands			or hit drum
ii. Hit table			or tap head
iii. Rub tummy			or shake hands
iv. Drop toy			or knock over block tower
Total			

Pass: 3/5 correct (If less, give more practice).

Turn-taking			
(c) Push car			or throw bean bag
(d) Build block tower			or take pegs off board
Total			

Pass: 1/2 (if less, give more practice).

Level 1(c) Appropriate play

Procedure: present items - if necessary, say "look, you play" or "what can you do with this/ these?"

	Child's Response	Did child need training to pass?	
(a) Toy car			or toy animal
(b) Hair brush			or cup
(c) Teapot & cup			or bowl and spoon
(d) Book			or paper and crayon
Total			

Pass: 3/4 (If less, give more practice).

Level 2 Performatives and Protowords

Procedure: Introduce a game, make an appropriate sound during the game and encourage the child to imitate.

	Child's Response	Did child need a prompt?	
(a) peek-a-boo			or ring-a-rosie
(b) model cars, planes			or teaset and doll
(c) model animals			or musical instruments
Total			

Pass: 2/3 (If 1, give more practice; if 0, go back to Level 1)

Level 3 First Words

Procedure: Introduce a game, model appropriate words and encourage the child to talk.

Spontaneous Speech	Child's Response	Did child need a prompt?	
(a) i. ball			or shoe
ii. car			or doll
iii. cup			or hat
iv. spoon			or key
Total			Pass 3/4

Imitated Speech

(b)i. bell			or train or pom pom
ii. bird			or comb or mop
iii. bath			or cow or mat
iv. truck			or pig or owl
Total			

Pass: 3/4 (If 1 or 2, give more practice. If 0, go back to Level 2.

CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT RECORD FORM

LEVELS 1, 2 AND 3

Child's Name ______________________ Date of Birth ________________

Level 1. Preverbal Skills	Date________		Date________		Date________		Date________	
	Score	P/E/N	Score	P/E/N	Score	P/E/N	Score	P/E/N
(a) Joint attention								
(b) i. Imitation								
ii. Turn-taking								
(c) Appropriate play								
Level 2. Performatives and Protowords								
Level 3. First Words (a) Spontaneous								
(b) Imitated								

P = Pass

E = Emerging, needs more practice

N = Not yet ready. Go back to earlier level.

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT SHEET

LEVEL 4: EARLY SENTENCES

Child's Name ____________________

Date ____________________

Rules	No. of Instances Observed	Percentage Use
1. Agent + Action		
2. Action + Object		
3. Agent + Object		
4. Modifier (possession) + Object Label		
5. Modifier (recurrence) + Object Label		
6. Modifier (attribution) + Object Label		
7. Agent/Object + Location		
8. Action and Location		
9. Negation + Any Word		
10. Introducer + Any Word		

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT SHEET

LEVEL 5(a) : COMMUNICATIVE INTENTION

Child's Name ____________________

Date ____________________

Intention	Observed	Mode
1. To indicate		
2. To obtain desired objects or services		
3. To regulate actions : protest		
reject		
request attention		
4. To initiate, maintain or terminate social interaction.		
5. To obtain information by asking questions		
6. To discover new words		
7. To give information		
8. To answer questions		

Mode: Gesture (G)
Speech (S)

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT SHEET

LEVEL 5(b) : MORPHEMES

Child's Name ______________________________

Date ______________________________

	Morphemes	Specific Form	No. of Instances Observed	Percentage Use
1	Present Progressive	-ing		
2	Preposition	in		
3	Preposition	on		
4	Plural (regular)	-s, -es, etc.		
5	Past (irregular)	came, ran, etc .		
6	Possessive	-'s		
7	Uncontractible Copula	is, am, are (as in "is she pretty")		
8	Articles	a, the		
9	Past Regular	-d, -ed, -/t/		
10	Third Person Regular	-s, -/z/, etc (as in "she runs".)		
11	Third Person Irregular	does, has (as in "They do" vs "She does")		
12	Uncontractible Auxiliary	is, am, are (as in "is she running")		
13	Contractible Copula	-'s, -'m,-'re (e.g. "She's pretty")		
14	Contractible Auxiliary	-'s, -'m, -'re (e.g. They-re running")		

MLU	MORPHEMES ACQUIRED
2.0 to 2.5	-ing, in, on
2.5 to 3.0	past irregular, possessive 's, uncontracted copula
3.0 to 3.7	articles, regular past, 3rd person regular
3.7 to 4.5	3rd person irregular, uncontracted auxiliary, contracted copula, contracted progressive auxiliary.

APPENDIX D

OBSERVATION RECORD FORM

1. ANALYSIS OF GESTURES

Child's Name ______________________________

Date ______________________________

FORM (Describe physical action or gesture)	**MEANING**	Date first used

OBSERVATION RECORD FORM

2. SINGLE WORDS

Child's Name ______________________

Date ______________________

WORD	Spontaneous (S) or Imitated (I)		Date first used	To whom or what used?	What was going on?	What do you think he was trying to say?	Was the word used again frequently?
	S	I					

OBSERVATION RECORD FORM

3. 2-, 3- OR MORE WORD PHRASES

Child's Name ____________________

Date ____________________

PHRASE	Date first used	To whom or what used?	What was going on?	What do you think he was trying to say?	Was the phrase used again frequently?

APPENDIX E

FIRST WORDS LIST

Speech Mode: Spontaneous (S)
Imitated (I)

PEOPLE	MODE	OBJECTS	MODE	LOCATION WORDS	MODE	ACTIONS	MODE	MODIFIERS	MODE	SOCIALLY USEFUL	MODE
Mummy		Apple		Up		Kiss		More		Bye-bye	
		Ball		Down		Sleep		My		Hi	
Daddy		Bikky		There		Gimme		Your		Hello	
Baby		Bus		Here		Want		Big		No	
		Car		In		Wash		Little		Please	
Family Names:		Cup		On		Eat		Mine		Thanks	
		Comb		That		Drink		Hot		Ta	
________		Chair		This		Sit		Wet			
________		Dolly				Down		That			
________		Shoe				Fall		This			
(child's name)		Spoon				Comb/Brush		A			
		Sweets				Gone/All gone		Yuk!			
Teacher's Name:		Teddy				Go					
		Bath				Stop					
________		Man				Throw					
		Bed				Up					
Name of Pets:		Eye				In					
Favourite Toys:		Key				Do					
		Door				Open					
________		Dog				Fix					
		Sock				Come					
Pronouns		T.V.				Look					
Me		Book									
I		Orange									
You		Bike									
Mine		Light									
		Tree									
		See-saw									
		Clock									

APPENDIX F

Brown's Fourteen Grammatical Morphemes and Their Order of Acquisition

Order of Acquisition	Morphemes	Specific Form(s)
1	Present Progressive	-ing
2-3	Prepositions	in, on
4	Plural (regular)	-s, -es, etc.
5	Past-irregular	came, ran, etc.
6	Possessive	-'s
7	Uncontractible Copula	is, am, are, (as in: she is pretty")
8	Articles	a, the
9	Past Regular	-d, -ed, -/t/
10	Third Person Regular	-s, -/z/, etc. (as in "She runs")
11	Third Person Irregular	does, has (as in: "They do" vs. "She does")
12	Uncontractible Auxiliary	is, am, are (as in: "They are running")
13	Contractible Copula	-'s,-'m, -'re (e.g. "She's pretty")
14	Contractible Auxiliary	-'s,-'m, -'re (e.g. "They're running")

From J.E. Mc Lean and L.K. Snyder-Mc Lean: A Transactional Approach to Early Language Training. Charles E. Merrill, Columbus, Ohio. 1978.

APPENDIX G

Articulation Development and Australian Norms

Age at which 75% accuracy is expected

Age (Years)

3	h	ŋ	p	m	w	b	n	d	t	j	k	g	ʒ
3 1/2	f												
4	l	ʃ	tʃ										
4 1/2	s	z	dʒ										
5	r												
6	v												
8	ð												
8 1/2	θ												

Phonetic Symbol	**Key Words**		
	Initial	Medial	Final
h	hat	behind	
ŋ		singer	wing
p	pie	happy	top
m	me	coming	some
w	wet	hour	
b	be	cubby	rub
n	no	funny	when
d	do	muddy	said
t	tie	letter	cat
j	you	beyond	
k	key	pocket	like
g	go	bigger	leg
ʒ		measure	
f	fun	coffee	laugh
l	leg	follow	ball
ʃ	she	pushing	wash
tʃ	chin	kitchen	watch
s	see	pussy	mess
z	zoo	easy	hose
dʒ	jump	magic	edge
r	run	borrow	
v	vest	ever	stove
ð	this	other	smooth
θ	thumb	nothing	both

Source: Kilminster, M.G.E. & Laird, E.M. Articulation Development in Children Aged Three to Nine Years. **Australian Journal of Human Communication Development,** 1983,6,1,23-30.

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1. General references cited in text
2. Useful references on language intervention
3. Other useful sources for:
    - i. Songs and finger games
    - ii. Books
    - iii. Games
    - iv. Pictures

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